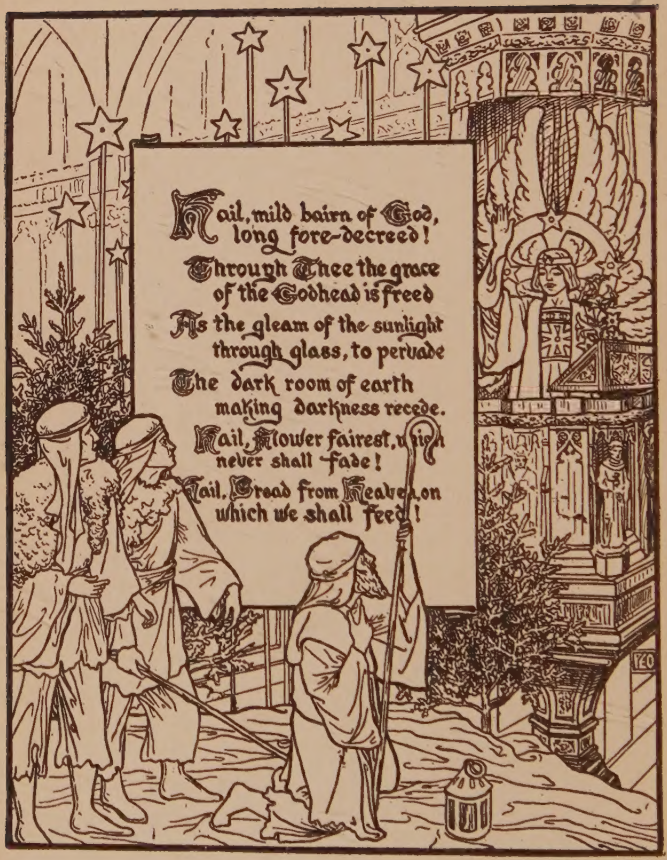

Hail, mild bairn of God,
long fore-decreed!
Through Thee the grace
of the Godhead is freed
As the gleam of the sunlight
through glass, to pervade
The dark room of earth
making darkness recede.
Hail, flower fairest, whose
never shall fade!
Hail, Bread from Heaven, on
which we shall feed!

0530

OLD-TIME CHURCH DRAMA ADAPTED

THE TRIUMPH OF ELIJAH

OLD-TIME
CHURCH DRAMA ADAPTED

MYSTERY PLAYS AND MORALITIES
OF EARLIER DAYS
FOR
SUNDRY CHURCHLY USES TO-DAY

By Rev. Phillips Endecott Osgood, D.D.

Rector of St. Mark's Church in the City of Minneapolis, Chairman of the Commission on Church Drama and Pageantry of the Episcopal Church. Member of the Committee on Educational and Religious Drama of the Federal Council of Churches

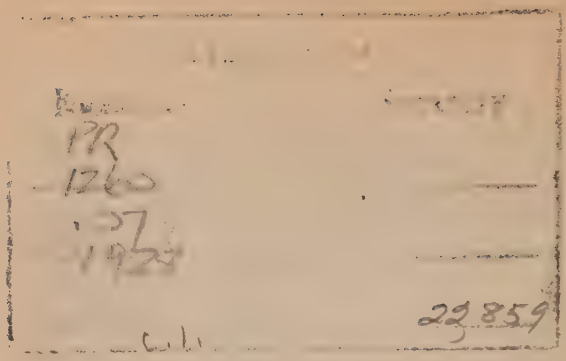
---

ILLUSTRATED

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

1928



OLD-TIME CHURCH DRAMA ADAPTED
COPYRIGHT, 1928, BY HARPER & BROTHERS
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES
FIRST EDITION

M-B

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter *Page*

I. INTRODUCTORY INTERPRETATION

PRECEDENT AND RELIGIOUS DRAMA 3

1. The Path of the Histrionic 4
2. The Re-Formation of Church Drama? 6
3. The Epic Ideal 7
4. Demonstration Plays 9
5. Acknowledgment 11

II. ANCIENT DRAMATIC SERVICES (Adapted)

1. THE FEAST OF LIGHTS (Greek; from the fourth century) 15
2. THE BURIAL OF THE ALLELUIA
   Also the BURNING OF THE PALMS 35
   For the beginning of Lent
   (Gothic: approximately the eleventh century)
3. THE BOY BISHOP 57
   Also the TOLLITE PORTAS—Lift up your heads, O ye Gates
   For Palm Sunday, Ascensiontide, etc.
   (French and Saxon, approximately the eleventh century)
4. THE QUEM QUÆRITIS 83
   and the DEPOSITIO CRUCIS 85
   and the ELEVATIO CRUCIS 87
   For Easter
   (Gothic, from the tenth century)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter *Page*

III. DEVELOPED RELIGIOUS DRAMAS

1. Melchizedek, Abraham, and Isaac 101
A Miracle Play—from the Chester Cycle
(English—fifteenth century)

2. The Nativity Cycle of the York Mystery Plays 127
a. Prologue (Towneley) 134
b. The Annunciation Play 137
c. The Nativity Play 139
d. The Shepherds' Play 146
e. The Meeting of the Three Kings 152
f. The Herod Play 155
g. The Adoration of the Three Kings 163
For Christmas
(English—thirteenth century)

3. The Summoning of Everyman 171
A Morality Play (Dutch and English—sixteenth century)

IV. ADAPTED ORATORIOS, TO BE USED AS SUNG MIRACLE PLAYS

1. Elijah. Mendelssohn 245
2. Judas Maccabæus. Handel 273

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Triumph of Elijah	*Frontispiece*	
A Setting for the York Mysteries	*Facing p.*	128
The Adoration of the Shepherds	"	150
The Herod Play	"	158
The Widow's Son	"	258

OLD-TIME CHURCH DRAMA ADAPTED

PRECEDENT

AND RELIGIOUS DRAMA

As-it-was-in-the-beginning-ists are partially right. But the rightness depends on whether they insist on the perpetuation of forms for their own sake or on the perpetuation of original intentions. Mere reduplication of externals is pathetic. It is an inferiority complex which induces scrupulous and anxious copying of minutest details of "precedent." "What did they do and how did they do it in the Golden Past?" asks the timorous copyist, attempting to repeat just that just so. Such reliance upon precedent is as foolish and as self-destroying as was Lot's retrospective wife. The Past is not sacrosanct and infallible.

Yet there is a sane use of precedent. To recognize that life has here or there mischosen a path which deviates from the main highroad of some noble endeavor into an impasse, and to retrace one's mental steps from the barrier which marks no thoroughfare back to the highroad again, there to take up the forward journey again —this is not foolish as-it-was-in-the-beginning ism.

This is the case with religious drama. This

drama was born and nurtured in faith. It was symbolic, team-play, self-expression—in the Mysteries of Asia Minor, of the Greek Festivals (with their major prophet tragedies) and of the sacramental worship of the Ante-Nicene age: then it came to new but continuing form in the Mysteries of the Craft Guilds which built the cathedrals. With the earlier Miracle and Morality Plays its genius remained, but all too soon the divergent path of the histrionic lured it, and the theater became its *impasse*.

THE PATH OF THE HISTRIONIC

The theater is realistic. Its genius is histrionic. Realism must be its ideal. Its actors must always approximate life's externals. They are objective. Those who attend the theater compose an audience, not a congregation. They are passive beneficiaries. They sit still and are acted *to*. The play is insulated by footlights or proscenium arch. The actors grow actorial.

This is no fault for the theater. This is its kind. These characteristics are its definition. They are what constitutes "theater."

But for religious drama the theatrical is a blind alley. The histrionic actor and the passive beneficiary audience are of an ideal that has diverged from that of worship or liturgy. The steps taken toward realism and the theater must

be retraced to the highroad if we are ever again to have a kind of self-expression in worship which approximates that of the noble days of religious drama at its purest.

Even the leaders of theater thought are advocating for the theater itself a partial return toward the highroad. Reinhardt is not alone when he insists that the theater must abolish the separation-line between actor and audience, must enlist the coöperation and fellow-feeling of the audience, must restore the atmosphere of church worship, in its intimate unification of officiants and congregation. The very characteristics of "new scenery" and its attendant staging are indicative of the attempt to tie in the audience through its imagination. Symbolic or expressivist scenery, the infinite beauty of recent lighting, stage-arrangements like Copeau's in Paris or that of "The Miracle's" first act here and abroad—all these abolish the footlights, annihilate a blatant, objective realism, and give the audience something to do to help the play by forcing it to use its imagination and emotion. The Little Theatre movement, the Drama Leagues, Settlement House Drama Associations, High School and Collegiate Plays further the project-method idea, making the audience cooperative and constructively participant.

THE RE-FORMATION OF CHURCH DRAMA?

The Church must not fail to retrace its steps in drama clear out of the *cul de sac* of the theatric. The prejudice against "plays in church" has real right behind it, so long as religious drama remains histrionic. If by religious drama we merely mean plays with religious subject-matter given in theatrical or would-be theatrical manner in the chancel of the church (as an audience-snaring device, perhaps?), then we had best be warned that righteous indignation will be and should be its lot. There is far too much mushy theatricality amateurishly used for sensationalist purposes in the Church today. Some of the "pageants" we all see are inept, in bad taste and false to the Church's purpose. They leave sensitive spirits aquiver with their impropriety. Oh! if some ordinance or sense of ordinary culture would demand that writers, parsons, players, and producers must study sample plays of the day when religious drama was religious! If we could bring right precedent effectively to bear!

For the Church needs just what worship-drama can give. Whether we like to admit it or not, the services of the churches have been too much objectivized. Some services are little more than Sunday theater. Not necessarily because they are sensational; the essence of theater is a professional and actorial officiant before a passive

beneficiary audience. No communion is completely exempt from the charge that there is room for democratization in responsibility for worship. The minister or priest who acts to an audience or who is forced to play a professional part while his people "just set an' take it" knows to his grief that something is needed to create team-play in self-expression Godward.

THE EPIC IDEAL

Surely it is well for us to have a working knowledge of old-time Mysteries, Miracles, and Moralities, that we may at least know our precedent. Precedents are as valid as they are in law, where they constitute a reservoir of advice for present questions. When a given cycle of Mystery Plays had been acted, modified, enriched, adapted, and rephrased for three centuries we may be reasonably assured that it met fundamental human needs and expressed vital human emotion with reasonable adequacy. The authored play, written in odd moments of a given month and produced once only in a parish, sinks into less significance beside the anonymous, traditional play of the generations. The latter is epic, like the epic poems which possessed their possessors "sæcula sæculorum," claiming their best service, ennobling those who lost themselves in the transmitted tradition to give it their life for their brief day.

To some the cathedrals may stand as the noblest monuments of their era, but there are some of us who cannot forget that the same guild craftsmen who built their stones and wrought their glass or furniture brought their self-dedication to symbolic consummation *in* those cathedrals, before their altars, with the Mystery Plays which were the emotional inheritance from a past they little dreamed was as wide and long as the Mysteries before the Christian era. The same freemasonry which was found in the Dionysian fellowship, acting out its myth of the god's resurrection every spring, which wove at Glastonbury the legend of the Table Round and acted its Druid-plus-Christian ritual of Amfortas and the stainless Knight of the Grail, this same freemasonry (although they did not guess the subconscious identity) brought its gift of Mysteries to the Risen Christ in the name of all the folk. The Mysteries are holy because they convey the life of those who poured forth through them their maximum of devotion. We are not even average well-educated unless we know and appreciate such plays as these. Not only for religion's sake should we comprehend their merits, but for the sake of literary culture, too. As for those who are enthusiastic about the unquestionable revival of religious drama on the way, they will take it for granted that their first projects are in the study and reproduction of typical plays of precedent.

They will know, too, that the education of congregations is ever so expedient. Congregations must cease to expect pious theatricals and must more and more expect religious drama of the definitely non-histrionic sort. Taste must be improved. Dignity must be considered. Symbolism must be utilized as the best means of braiding in the coöperation of the congregation. The play must be an act of worship on the part of all.

DEMONSTRATION PLAYS

These plays are offered as a means to this end. They are simple adaptations of standard, classic "dramatic offices." They keep the flavor of the original scripts. Each one has been worked out in actual use. The rubrics of direction are the survival of the fittest hints. They have been found to have power; they create their atmosphere. They should be further utilized on this same basis.

Yet these plays are not magical. By themselves they will not succeed. They will not automatically and immediately create the desired impression without interpretive preparation of the congregation. The minister should study the period of the earlier Mystery Plays until he can guide his people into comprehension of their aim. The attitude of the people is as important as the play itself, however skilled may be its preparation. Until the parish knows reasonably well the motive

and function of religious drama the play itself should wait. The plays provide media for corporate devotion, provided the corporate devotion is there in advance. We must insure that no mere audience comes to witness; *a congregation must be guaranteed, to participate in an act of worship.*

Expedients may aid in this guaranty. Programs had best be in the hands of all attendants, with an interpretive word and with clear indication when and how the congregation is to participate, with its responses clearly printed and with explicit directions for standing, kneeling, and sitting. No names of officiants should ever be announced; this is good for the actors and for the congregation; it demonstrates that personal vanity can have no opportunity but that the players desire selflessly to give themselves to the message of the play for that message's sake, unalloyed. Applause is out of place not only in church, but also in parish house or hall if a play is devotional in intention. Costumes may well be called vestments; the actors had best be called participants, officiants, or "those who present the drama." Rehearsals and the final service should be opened with a brief prayer. Exactly the same atmosphere should prevail as with clergy and choir before and during services. Quiet reverence, sincere earnestness, mystic happiness, and modest self-forgetfulness will characterize the group,

keying the mood of all to its standard. If this is done the effectiveness of such quaint, naïve, and flavorous old plays as these will be heartening and unquestionable.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In his own special project of old-time religious drama, revived and adapted for cultural and devotional education, the author's indebtedness to many helpers is great. He is conscious how much these typical ancient plays owe in their typical modernization to the sympathy and enthusiasm of his friends. St. Mark's Drama Council and Choir of Minneapolis have been helpers indeed. While Mr. Stanley R. Avery in his constant intuition and musical expertness and Miss Mary McKinlay in her unfailing collaboration with producing and care-taking (both of St. Mark's) are wellnigh co-authors of the contents of this and of the succeeding book of modern religious plays. Mr. J. W. LeGallez of Philadelphia is really to be accredited with these publications; without his interest, belief in them, and aid they would perhaps never have been "brought to book."

P. E. O.

The Feast of Lights

A DRAMATIC SERVICE
UTILIZING THE CENTRAL IDEA
OF
THE VERY ANCIENT GREEK
CANDLE-LIGHTING SERVICE
FOR
THE EPIPHANY

✠

THE FEAST OF LIGHTS

I

THE celebration of Epiphany by the Eastern Church long antedates the celebration of Christmas by the Western Church. The Feast of the Outshining was from the beginning a beloved festival. And it was celebrated as a Feast of Lights. How the Greek Church loved and loves the beauty of candle-flames! The ceremony wherein the Christ-candle's light is communicated to a churchful of candles is well worthy of adaptation and modern use. Probably there is no occasional dramatic service that is more widely known and utilized by all communions than this. The author pretends no uniqueness in the version presented herewith; it is simply a sample service showing a typical working out of the old-time symbolism.

The Epiphany was and is missionary in its lesson. In the beginning it connoted both the Birth and the Baptism of Jesus; its association with the Magi is appreciably later. Yet it was Manifestation always; God was missionary to usward; Christ was consecrated to an universal task. The Light of the World was *for* the world. Therefore the spread of the light should be illus-

trative of missionary truth. The motif of this service is right only when it is of universal witness.

II

The service indicated here involves the following practical considerations:

1. The candles must be prepared in advance. "Votive tapers" are best. The shorter length is most economical. Each taper should be thrust through a square or circle of cardboard, which will catch the drip. The tapers should then be placed in the racks of the pews and the choir stalls, handle end up; in sufficient numbers for all probable attendants.

2. For emergency use, pails of water should be placed in inconspicuous but convenient places. It may be well to turn the church cushions good side down.

3. Longer candles should be placed for
The "Twelve Apostles"
The "Historic Ministry"
The "Three Kings."

Paper cups make good protectors for the drip of these candles. Sharpen these candles.

4. The minister who reads the lessons from the Bible and the choir members should bring electric flashlights by which to read. They should be urged

to keep them from the line of vision of the congregation when alight.

5. The cross of candles for the address, if this theme is used, should be in position. It cannot be moved into place all set up.

This is most easily constructed on a step-ladder to which is fitted a board or boards extending to either side for the horizontal arms of the Cross. The slope of the ladder is right for the candles. Drape the ladder with inconspicuous cloth or asbestos paper. The candles may be short, and should be fixed to a small square block, that they may be handled and set up with ease and sureness.

6. For the star take a round tin box and cut the star-shaped opening in the cover, and an aperture for the electric-light cord on the side. Paste thin paper over the opened cover of the box, colored lightly with crayons the color of the wall against which it is to go. Hang above the altar or high in the center of the chancel or pulpit-platform, connected by a thin electric cord; the light to be turned on from below.

7. One tall candle and candlestick in the center of the sanctuary, beneath the star. Preferably a simple wooden candlestick made from a four-foot piece of lumber, with a base. If the candle is as tall as it should be, steps should be placed at the base of the stick that those who light their candles from this Christ-candle may do so conveniently.

Sharpen the candle for convenience of lighting the other candles from it.

8. Another tall candle and candlestick in the center of choir or at the front of the pulpit-platform, prepared as is the Christ-candle, but either at a lower level or of smaller sizes. Or at the top of the cross of candles. The Candle of the Church's Faith.

9. The Three Kings are to be sumptuously vested in Oriental garments, with crowns on their heads. Each King carries a casket or coffer or censer.

10. The Twelve Disciples are to be vested in simple Oriental garments. So is St. Paul.

11. The representatives of the "Historic Ministry" are to be vested according to the customs of one's own communion. Children should be allowed to sit at the ends of the pews. They will enjoy the importance of their function as receivers of the light.

THE SERVICE

1. The Processional Hymn.
   Hail to the Lord's Anointed.
   (*During which the choir enters and takes its position. At the Amen the church is darkened. The Disciples and Paul follow to their seats.*)
2. Invocation.
   O God of Light, shed the bright beams of Thy Being in the darkness of our hearts: and kindle our love of Thee until our lives burn with the clear light of Thine own beauty that we may let our lights so shine before men that they, seeing our good works, may glorify Thee, our Father Who Art in Heaven, through Jesus Christ, Thine own Outshining! Amen.
3. The Lord's Prayer.
4. *The minister then briefly explains the symbolism of this service and its ancient origin, noting that the Bible passages which tell of the steps in the spread of the Light are answered by hymns which are the opportunity for our own attunement thereto. And that the dramatic service will now begin its development with the oldest of all Christian hymns, which comes from the very earliest*

days of Upper Rooms and of the Love-Feasts of the third century. We think of the quiet twilight falling, the patriarchal and the childlike Christians, slaves and patricians, scarred survivors of persecution and clear-eyed youths, Greek maidens and traveling merchants, gathered about the Table and lighting the candles as they sing.

5. The Candle-light Hymn.

O Brightness of the immortal Father's face,
Most holy, heavenly, blest,
Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom His truth and grace
Are visibly expressed.

The sun is sinking now and one by one
The lamps of evening shine:
We hymn the eternal Father, and the Son
And Holy Ghost divine.

Worthy art Thou at all times to receive
Our hallowed praises, Lord.
O Son of God, be Thou, in Whom we live
Through all the world adored.

Amen.

(*During the last stanza the minister takes his position at the Bible, carrying his concealed flashlight.*)

6. The Reader:

"Hearken to the reading of the words of those who sat in darkness but who prophesied of the coming of the Light.

"The prophet Micah doth say:

(*Read Micah* iv: *1, 2, 3, 4, and* v: *2, 4.*)

"The prophet who calleth himself Malachi, the Messenger, doth say:

(*Read Malachi* iii: *1, 2, and* iv: *2a.*)

"The prophet Isaiah doth say:"

(*Read Isaiah* vii: *14;* ix: *2, 6, 7; and* lx: *1, 2, 3.*)

7. *The choir and people shall then sing the hymn:*

Watchman, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are—etc.

8. The Reader:

"In the fullness of time, God sent forth His son to lighten our darkness. Hearken to the reading of the words of St. John, the beloved disciple;" and he shall read:

(*St. John* i: *1-5, 9-14.*)

(*As this passage is read, an appointed assistant takes a lighted taper and brings it to the Christ-candle, being careful to allow no ray of its flickering light to be seen by the congregation; he stands back to the congregation, shielding the light, until the words,* "And the Word became flesh," *when he lights the Christ-candle.*

Or better yet, have a cylindrical shade arranged about the top of the Christ-candle, perhaps of thin asbestos, inside which the wick can be burning before the beginning of the service; then, at the proper moment, the shade can be whisked away, leaving the flame visible.)

9. *The choir and people shall thereupon sing the hymn:*

Sing, O sing, this blessed morn
Unto us a child is born.

(*The first, second, and fourth stanzas are sufficient. Any other Christmas hymn may be substituted.*)

10. The Reader:

"Unto those in lands afar arose a bright and morning star which was seen of those whose eyes were lifted in hope and expectation, who followed to the Christ Child. Hearken:" Then he shall read:—

(*St. Matthew* ii: *1-11.*)

(*As the phrase is reached,* "Lo, the star, which they saw in the east—stood over where the young child was," the star should be lighted.)

11. The minister says:

"The Wise Men brought their gifts to the manger-throne. Likewise we make our offerings to Him Who lay therein."

The choir and people sing the ancient carol:

We Three Kings of Orient are.

(*As the carol is sung the Three Kings, clad in sumptuous Oriental garments, bear their coffers to the altar. Each King kneels and lays his gift at the foot of the Christ-candle. Then each King receives a long candle which he lights from the Christ-candle. Side by side they return to the congregation, to be met at the head of the aisle by those who gather the offerings of the people. They move back as the alms basons progress through the pews, the hymn still being sung. At the rear of the church they turn and precede the men with the basons to the front, where the offerings of the people are likewise laid at the foot of the Christ-candle. In case the carol is not sufficiently long to cover all the action outlined, the hymn may be added:*)

Holy offerings, rich and rare;
Offerings of praise and prayer.

12. The Reader:
"The Christ-light spread first of all to His disciples. The candle of the Lord each loyal

follower became. Hearken to the word of their discipleship." Then shall he read:—

(*St. Matthew* ix: *36-38, and* x: *1-4.*)

(*As he starts to read, let the Disciples form a circle about the Christ-candle. He should read the names of the Disciples very slowly, and as each name is mentioned, let one of the Disciples light his candle from the Christ-candle. When the name of Iscariot is read the candle of one Disciple may be lighted and quenched as the Disciple withdraws, his place to be taken by another. In which case the reader will add to the scriptural verse about Iscariot, the phrase,* "Whose place was later taken by Matthias," *at which the new member of the group lights his candle. Or the reader may not pause, but say,* "Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him," *and pause until it is evident no candle is lighted thereat, and then proceed with the name of Matthias, at which the twelfth Disciple lights his candle.*)

13. "Let us now sing the hymn of our own call to discipleship."

The Hymn:

Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild, restless sea.

(*During this hymn let the Disciples stand in a straight row, facing the people; candle flames on a level.*)

14. The Reader:

"The disciples became apostles. To their number was added Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle to the Gentiles. As he himself hath told us:" And he reads:

(*Acts* xxvi: *13-18.*)

(*As he reads this Paul lights his candle from the Christ-candle and takes his place at the center of the Disciple* (*now Apostle*) *row.*)

15. The Reader:

"The apostles obeyed their command to spread the Light. They carried it far and wide. Christ was with them. The Church was His body. The Glory of the Church was its Light of Faith, the Living Christ." And he reads:—

(*Hebrews* i: *1-4, and 7.*)

(*At the beginning of this passage the Apostles come forward to the Candle of the Church and, forming a circle about it, together they light that candle. At the conclusion of the passage they remain in a circle there, with their candles a ring of light about the central flame.*)

16. The Minister:

"The life of the Church is the Holy Spirit.

Cloven tongues like as of fire sit upon its true and faithful believers. The Church flames with the presence of the Living Christ and of the Holy Spirit."

(*All rising and the Apostles holding their candles higher, without announcement, the choir leads the people, still standing, in the singing of the first, third, fourth, seventh, eighth, and ninth stanzas of the significant hymn, "Veni Creator":*)

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire
And lighten with celestial fire.

(*16 can be omitted if the service seems to be too long.*)

17. The Minister (*the congregation still standing*):

"From the Christ-Light came the Light of that discipleship and apostleship which in its turn kindled the clear shining of the flame of the faith of the Church. From the ever-burning Light of the Church the historic ministry receives its flame of fire. Apostles of a later day, the Church's ministers still must spread the Light."

(*Those who represent "the historic ministry," one for each of the orders of the ministry as the given communion's polity recognizes them, step forward and light*

APOSTLES
APOSTLES
1. MATTHEW
2. JOHN
3. MARK
4. LUKE
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15. PAUL
16. GREECE
17. ROME
18. EGYPT
19. PERSIA
20. RUSSIA
21. FRANCE
22. ENGLAND
23. SCANDINAVIA
24. GERMANY
25. AMERICA
26. CANADA
27. SPAIN
29. LATIN AMERICA
30. CHINA
31. JAPAN
32. PHILIPPINES
33. AFRICA
34. ALASKA
35. INDIA
SUGGESTED ARRANGEMENT OF CANDLES FOR CANDLE-LIGHT SERVICE ADDRESS

their candles at the Candle of the Church. Among them should be the minister himself.)

18. The Address.

The Apostles and other officiants retire to their raised seats in the chancel. The congregation sits.

The address must be brief: little more than an object-lesson address. The gist of it is the symbolism of the candles. The minister may find it expedient to utilize assistants (*those who represent the Historic Ministry?*) *to light the candles as he talks, timing their candle-lighting to his mention of the proper name.*

The address outline is somewhat as follows. (*The Epitomization of Church history may need some changes, according to the convictions of certain communions, to whom no offense is intended by this summary.*)

"The Church cannot be confined to one race or nation. It must shine out. Beyond all borders. It must break forth. It must manifest the Light. The Apostles carried the Light out, out, out!" (*The Apostle-lights 5-14 are lighted and 1 and 2 are indicated.*)

"The story which the Church had to tell was presently crystallized in the Gospels." (*The*

Evangelist-lights, 1, 2, 3, and 4 are lighted.)

"Two Evangelists were also Apostles.

"And St. Paul was chief Apostle to the Gentiles. The Epiphany ideal found its perpetuation in his faith and vision." (*Paul's light is 15.*)

"We do not know to what lands all the Apostles went. We do know that St. John went to Greece." (*With 1 light 16, the candle of the Greek Church.*)

"We know that St. Paul and St. Peter went to Rome." (*With 15 and 5 light 17, the candle of the Latin Church.*)

"Tradition says that John Mark went to Egypt" (*with 3 light 18, the Coptic or Egyptian Church*), "where the ancient Coptic Church was bearer of his witness. St. James is reputed to have gone to Persia and perhaps to India, where the Jacobite Church bears on his name and witness." (*16 lights 19, for Persia.*) "Some say that St. Paul, some say that Joseph of Arimathea, came to England. At least the Church of Britain is ancient and authentic. Some say that Christians from Greece or Rome established it." (*Light 22 for England with the candle of St. Paul or Rome or Greece or of an unnamed Apostle, as preferred.*)

"From the Greek Church comes the Russian." (*16 lights 20, Russia.*)

"From Rome as a European center the light of St. Peter and St. Paul spread to the Franks, the Saxons, and the Vikings." (*17 lights 21, France; 23, Scandinavia; and 24, Germany.*)

"From Rome came the Church in Spain." (*17 lights 27, Spain.*)

"From England comes the Church in our own nation, in Canada and Australia." (*22 lights 25, the United States; 26, Canada; 27, Australia.*)

"From Spain comes the Church in Latin America." (*27 lights 28, Latin America.*)

"We recognize that every communion has done and is doing missionary work. All the Churches mentioned were planted by missionary heroism and self-sacrifice and they are true to their genius. Without disparaging any of the missionary work other Churches and nations are doing we think of the work we ourselves are doing. We cannot follow the trails of light which cross and recross the world. For ourselves, we consider our own duty and glad privilege of witness. From America" (*22*) "the light goes out to China" (*29*), "Japan" (*30*), "the Philippines" (*31*), "Africa" (*32*), "Alaska" (*33*), "and to India" (*34*). "Also to such lands as those of Latin and South America, to the Indians of our country, and to other

groups within our nation, to supplement the light already burning there.

"Shall we lift our light and let it shine, as candles of the Lord?

"In symbolism of our duty and privilege of witness we now prepare to light our tapers and go forth into the darkness of the outer world.

"That the symbolism of this final act may be unimpeded, those present will rise and put on their garments for the out-of-doors. The ambassadors of the 'Historic Ministry' will then come to you, bearing their lighted candles. When you receive the light pass it on to your neighbor. When every candle in the church is aflame hold yours high and we shall say the Creed together. Then, after the Benediction, follow the choir to the door and go forth into the darkness with your shining light. The ancient custom was to carry the lighted candle home to kindle the hearth fire. Shall we try to do the same?"

19. *The choir, Apostles, and people stand. They follow the directions given, putting on their out-of-door garments and taking each a candle. The "Historic Ministry" light the candles of those at the end of the choir rows; then, passing down the aisles, they light the candles of those at the ends of all the pews,*

who in their turn pass on the light. This during the singing of the hymn:

God is working His purpose out
As year succeeds to year.

If this hymn is not long enough, another may be added, such as:

Christ for the world we sing
The world to Christ we bring.

When all the candles are ablaze and the lighters return to the chancel, all hold their candles high (facing the center aisle, that all may see the beauty of the flames), and together they say:—

20. The Apostles' or Nicene Creed.
and add, singing,
21. The Doxology
22. *Whereupon the Minister pronounces the following benediction:*
"And may God, Who commandeth light to shine out of darkness, shine in all our hearts, to give us all the knowledge of the glory of the love of God, as in the face of Jesus Christ.

Amen."

23. *The choir goes in procession down through the center aisle, divides at the rear of the*

church, and comes up the side aisles, facing inward and continuing to sing until all the congregation has gone out by the middle aisle. The choir first sings the brief hymn:

Christ, Whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only Light.

And afterward, while the people depart:

Onward Christian Soldiers.

The choir then leaves the church and is dismissed by a brief prayer and benediction.

The Burial of the Alleluia

AND

The Burning of The Palms

A DRAMA SERVICE FOR
THE BEGINNING OF LENT

(*Eleventh Century Customs*)

✠

THE BURIAL OF THE ALLELUIA

(A Drama Service for the beginning of Lent.)

I. In Explanation.

Long before the Christian faith reached western Europe the peoples of the forests and valleys there, in the pursuance of their Nature-faith cycle, were accustomed each year to "bury the summer" at the approach of winter, and to resurrect the symbolic figure of summer as spring drew on. The banishment of King Winter closely approximated the later Easter date and Easter joy. Such rites are too fundamental to be disregarded. The Church did not disregard them. There was a way to adopt and adapt their intention and to Christianize it. The penitential season and the Resurrection festival were obvious means of carrying forward folk-customs, baptized and educative for The Faith; set to higher Service! The Church dealt with childlike folk: its methods of teaching had to be simple, objective, dramatic, symbolic.

Widespread in France, Normandy, and Germany from the time of Charlemagne for a century or so, we find stray evidences of the minor service for Septuagesima or Ash Wed-

nesday, called the Burial of the Alleluia. "Alleluia" had to be foresworn during the penitential weeks; sober and sorrowful self-examination and confession must be the theme. Therefore they provided a funeral service and even a coffin for the Alleluia, with the knowledge that it would rise with Christ at Eastertide and be the first word sung on Easter morning! Then joy would be born anew with the Master!

The actual liturgy of the Burial of the Alleluia is not to be found in full; but the general outline of the service is plain. It can be approximated today.

The ceremony which gave Ash Wednesday its name is likewise clearly indicated in the records, albeit the definite liturgy is missing. The Palm Sunday palms and garlands of the previous year, symbols that the people acknowledged Christ the King of their hearts, were contritely brought to church with the acknowledgment of broken faith with that King, in the year's list of sins. The palms were solemnly burned and with their ashes the people were marked on their foreheads on Ash Wednesday, with the implied admonition, "Wash you: make you clean!"

The following service combines these two symbolic ceremonies. So far as the exact words of ancient services can be found, they

are used; lacking them, the Bible, Breviary, and Prayer Book are sources for proper phrases. The hymns, "Sing Alleluia forth in duteous praise" and "Alleluia, song of gladness," are historically the identical hymns of the ancient service, the former written in the fifth century and the latter about the eleventh. The De Profundis and Dies Iræ (as the Requiem) are likewise authentic, of course. So are portions of the Commination Service. The Burial Psalm with its mention of the fading grass was illustrated by the palms and also, according to the old Lincoln Cathedral version, by a sod of quickly grown and rapidly withering grass for the Alleluia symbol. All the dramatic arrangement of the service suggested herewith claims no exact precedent; it merely utilized historic items with utmost freedom. The service is probably self-explanatory, necessitating no previous explanation to the congregation, except some historic background given in advance notices and publicity.

The more fully the ritual is carried through, the more the "atmosphere" of the Mediæval ceremony will be conveyed.

NOTES:

1. *There are two Choirs.*

The first is vested in white, carrying

palms and flowers and the Alleluia banner. It is composed of boys or women and only such men as can be spared from the second choir.

The second choir is vested in black, or in monastic cowls and habits. It carries candles and incense, and the coffin. It is composed entirely of men.

2. *An assistant minister* or lay reader enters with the first choir; the *parish minister* with the second.
3. The only properties for this service are:

Palms and garlands.

A banner, with the word "Alleluia" on each side, garlanded.

A coffin, preferably small (four feet long?) and of ancient form, painted black; without a cover.

A pall; an oblong of purple cloth, with a cross of another color, black or gold, appliquéd upon it, preferably extending to each hem.

A brazier, all of metal, standing at the top of the chancel steps, center. A cover which can be put over it tightly, to smother the flames of the burning palms in case they grow dangerous.

Candles.

4. *A leaflet* should be provided for use by the

congregation. It should contain only those portions of the service in which the congregation joins, with sufficient indication of cues.

II. THE SERVICE

(*The processional of the choir and group of participants should be made as festive as possible. The choir in white, carrying palms or garlands of flowers or stalks of lilies. In the center of the procession a beautiful banner, inscribed "Alleluia," garlanded and ornamented with streamers of flowers, the ends of which are carried by vested attendants. If preferred, there may be a high canopy above it, carried by four boys or men. The procession should be solemn, and should make the full circuit of the church.*)

PROCESSIONAL HYMN:

Sing Alleluia forth in duteous praise,
Ye citizens of heaven; Oh, sweetly raise
An endless Alleluia.
Ye Powers, who stand before the eternal Light,
In hymning choirs reëcho to the height
An endless Alleluia.
The holy city shall take up your strain,
And with glad songs resounding wake again
An endless Alleluia.
In blissful antiphons ye thus rejoice

To render to the Lord with thankful voice
An endless Alleluia.
Ye who have gained at length your palms in bliss,
Victorious ones, your chant shall still be this,
An endless Alleluia.
There, in one grand acclaim, forever ring
The strains which tell the honor of your King,
An endless Alleluia.
This is sweet rest for weary ones brought back;
This is glad food and drink which ne'er shall lack
An endless Alleluia.
While Thee, by Whom were all things made, we praise
Forever, and tell out in sweetest lays
An endless Alleluia.
Almighty Christ, to Thee our voices sing
Glory for evermore; to Thee we bring
An endless Alleluia.

(*The banner is carried to the chancel, where its bearer grounds his staff as the hymn ends; preferably in a floorstand. The congregation and choir remain standing. The attendants of the banner remain, flanking it.*)

THE ASSISTANT MINISTER:

I heard a great voice of much people in

Heaven, saying Alleluia: Salvation and glory and honor and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God. And again they said Alleluia.

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne, saying Amen; Alleluia.

THE ASSISTANT MINISTER:

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

Alleluia! The Lord reigneth; He is clothed with majesty. Alleluia!

THE ASSISTANT MINISTER:

Alleluia! Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool, for He is holy. Alleluia!

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

Alleluia! Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill, for the Lord our God is holy. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous: and give thanks for a remembrance of His holiness. Alleluia!

THE ASSISTANT MINISTER:

Ye shall take you the boughs of goodly

trees, branches of palm trees and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God. Alleluia!

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

This day is holy unto the Lord: we will mourn not nor weep. This is His name, the Lord, our righteousness. The Lord is King, forever and ever. Sing praises unto our King. Alleluia!

THE MINISTER (*Standing just inside the main door of the church, clad in a black habit. He speaks from the rear of the church, motionless*):

The Lord is King of Heaven. Is He King of our hearts?

THE ASSISTANT MINISTER:

I beheld and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, Saying: Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Alleluia!

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE *sing:*

Ye watchers and ye holy ones,
Bright seraphs, cherubim and thrones,
Raise the glad strain! Alleluia!
Cry out, dominions, princedoms, powers.

Virtues, archangels, angels' choirs,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

O friends in gladness let us sing
Supernal anthems echoing.
Alleluia, Alleluia!
To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!
Amen.

THE MINISTER (*at the door*):

Are your minds set upon righteousness, O ye congregation?

THE ASSISTANT MINISTER:

Our mouths show forth God's righteousness.

THE MINISTER:

But do our lives show forth God's righteousness? God forbid that we should draw nigh unto Him with our mouths and with our lips that we should honor Him but that we remove our hearts far from Him!

THE ASSISTANT MINISTER:

Should we not therefore sing our Alleluia?

THE MINISTER:

There is a time to laugh and a time to weep: a time to dance and a time to mourn. Bring forth now, therefore, fruits meet for repentance. The sacrifice of God is a

broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise!

(*Behind the minister comes in the black-robed male choir. Under the lead of the minister they repeat or chant in unison the following sentences from the ancient Commination Office:*)

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

And who may abide the day of His coming? Who shall be able to endure when he appeareth?

His fan is in His hand, and He will purge His floor and gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn the chaff with fire.

The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night: and when men shall say, Peace, and all things are safe, then shall judgment come upon them.

Therefore brethren, take we heed betime, while the day of salvation lasteth, for the night cometh, when none can work.

But let us, while we have the light, believe in the light and walk as children of the light.

For though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow: and though they be like purple, yet they shall be made white as wool.

Turn ye (saith the Lord) from all your wickedness, make you new hearts and a new spirit.

Let us therefore return unto Him, Who is the merciful receiver of all true penitent sinners: assuring ourselves that He is ready to pardon us if we come to Him with faithful repentance; if we will take His easy yoke and light burden upon us, to follow Him in lowliness, patience and charity.

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

(*The first choir, in the chancel, files out about the Alleluia banner, which its carrier brings to the front of the chancel. Arrayed thus in festal ranks, they begin to sing the following stanza. While they are singing, the members of the male choir at the door are given lighted candles. The open coffin is carried in the midst of this choir. One member carries the pall, folded. Censer-bearers* (*thurifers*) *walk ahead of and behind the coffin. The male, black-clad procession starts up the aisle.*)

THE ALLELUIA CHOIR (*now in the chancel*) *sings:*

Alleluia! Song of gladness,
Voice of joy that cannot die:
Alleluia is the anthem
Ever dear to choirs on High:
In the House of God abiding,
Thus they sing eternally.

THE ADVANCING, BLACK-ROBED CHOIR (*in unison*):

Alleluia, thou resoundest,
True Jerusalem and free:
Alleluia, joyful mother,
All thy children sing with thee:
But by Babylon's sad waters
Morning exiles now are we.

Alleluia cannot always
Be our song while here below:
Alleluia, our transgressions
Make us for a while forego:
For the solemn time is coming
When our tears for sin must flow.

(*By this time the burial choir is arranged below the Alleluia choir. The coffin is rested on the ground. The minister*

mounts the chancel steps, and as he does so, the white-robed choir falls back, leaving the banner-bearer alone confronting him. The minister seizes the banner: he turns to the congregation.)

THE MINISTER:

I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, from henceforth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: even so saith the Spirit: for they rest from their labors. So saith the Church of ALLELUIA!

Today it dieth, until with Christ it riseth at His glorious resurrection! For in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye yourselves also to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(*He takes the banner from its pole, rolls it up and reverently places it in the coffin. The congregation kneels. The minister leads them in the saying of the De Profundis. As it is said, certain black-robed choir members file up into the chancel, take the palm branches and garlands from the other choir, and assemble about the brazier.*)

ALL:

Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice.

O let Thine ears consider well: the voice of my complaint.

If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss: O Lord, who may abide it?

For there is mercy with thee: therefore shalt Thou be feared.

I look for the Lord: my soul doth wait for him: in His word is my trust.

My soul fleeth unto the Lord: before the morning watch, I say, before the morning watch.

O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him is plenteous redemption.

And He shall redeem Israel: from all his sins.

(*The congregation remains kneeling.*)

THE MINISTER:

The palms and garlands of our acknowledgment of God as King are made of no avail by our transgressions. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust shall they return. As soon as Thou scatterest them, they are even as a sleep: and fade away suddenly like the grass. In the morning it is green, and groweth up: but in the evening it is cut down, dried up and withered. For we consume away in Thy displeasure and are afraid at Thy wrathful indignation. O

teach us to number our days: that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

(*The black-robed men place the palms and garlands in the brazier. Not all at once, lest the flame prove dangerous. A candle-bearer sets the flame of his candle to them. A choir member stands by with a cover to fit over the brazier if danger threatens. The palms and garlands burn. The white-robed choir retires to the choir stalls and kneels. Organ music during this action. The black-robed choir kneels before the minister.*)

THE MINISTER (*with solemnity, over the coffin*):

Until the day when we be pure in heart and risen indeed with Christ, we commit our joyful Alleluia unto God who gave it. Amen!

(*The minister shall then pour into the brazier a little water and mix it with the ashes. The black-robed choir still kneels before him. Dipping his finger into the mixture, he marks a cross on the foreheads of those near him, saying:*)

O God, Whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive: Receive our humble petitions: and though we be tied and bound with the chain of our

sins, yet let the pitifulness of Thy great mercy loose us: for the honor of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate.

Amen!

(*And the congregation, led by the assistant minister, shall say:*)

Turn Thou us, O good Lord, and so shall we be turned. Be favorable, O Lord, be favorable to Thy people, who turn to Thee in weeping, fasting, and praying. For Thou art a merciful God, full of compassion, long-suffering and of great pity. Thou sparest when we deserve punishment and in Thy wrath thinkest upon mercy. Spare Thy people, good Lord, spare them, and let not Thine heritage be brought to confusion. Hear us, O Lord, for Thy mercy is great, and after the multitude of Thy mercies look upon us: Through the merits and mediation of Thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(*Then shall all the people and choirs sing certain verses from the Dies Iræ, the ancient Requiem hymn, during which the black-robed choir, or only the bearers, shall first cover the coffin with a purple pall, then carry the coffin reverently and slowly out of the church, or to the space before the altar.*)

ALL:

Day of Wrath! O Day of Mourning!
All my shame with anguish owning:
Spare, O God, thy suppliant groaning!

When the Judge His seat attaineth,
And each hidden deed arraigneth
Nothing undiscerned remaineth.

What shall I, frail man, be pleading?
Who for me be interceding,
When the just are mercy needing?

King of Majesty tremendous,
Who dost free salvation, send us,
Fount of pity, oh, befriend us!

Think, Good Jesus, my salvation
Cost Thy wondrous Incarnation:
Leave me not to reprobation!

Faint and weary, Thou hast sought me,
On the Cross of suffering bought me.
Shall such grace be vainly brought me?

(*The tune changes*)

Low I kneel, with heart-submission;
See, like ashes, my contrition:
Help me in my last condition.

Ah, that day of tears and mourning!
From the dust of grief returning
Man for judgment must prepare him:
Spare, O God, in mercy spare him!
Lord, all pitying, Jesus blest,
Grant them thine eternal rest.
Amen.

(*The minister, having followed the burial group to the door, pauses inside the door and pronounces the benediction:*)

THE GOD OF PEACE, WHO BROUGHT AGAIN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD, MAKE YOU PERFECT IN EVERY GOOD WORK TO DO HIS WILL; THAT, HAVING BROUGHT YOU TO THE DEATH OF REPENTANCE AND TO A PURE HEART, HE MAY BRING YOU TO THE JOY OF SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION WITH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!

(*The choir and then the congregation leave the church in silence.*)

"The Boy Bishop"

AND

"Tollite Portas"

A SERVICE

FROM TENTH TO TWELFTH CENTURY

SOURCES

FOR

PALM SUNDAY

ASCENSION DAY

OR THE FEAST

OF THE PRESENTATION

✣

"THE BOY BISHOP"

(AND "TOLLITE PORTAS")

I

IN EXPLANATION

Two dramatic services go deep into the centuries, preceding most of our minor offices as we know them. In various countries they were utilized in varying associations of worship and of teaching from the ninth century through the thirteenth or fourteenth. These are the ceremonies of "Tollite Portas" ("Lift up your heads, O ye Gates") and of the "Boy Bishop." Their symbolism is most adaptable, of charmingly naïve directness. They are worthy of rescue.

The "Tollite Portas" was used on any solemn occasion when the doors of the church might be opened with impressive challenge and ceremony. Perhaps the idea goes back to the very earliest days when the gates to the church had always to be guarded by a sentinel, asking the password from those who knocked. At least the symbolism of Christ's appearance before the Gates of the Temple was capable of allegory on Palm Sunday, on Ascension Day or at the Feast of the Presenta-

tion. The twenty-fourth Psalm provides the basis for the liturgy, and was so used. The doors were closed; the congregation waited outside; the procession approached the doors; the highest dignitary knocked upon them; the choir in the gallery above the doors looked down and chanted, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall rise up in His holy place?" The people below made answer; the triumphant song, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates," was the signal for the doors to be flung wide. In streamed the throng! Is not this appropriate for the day commemorating the Triumphal Entry either into the Temple or into the Temple not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens?

With this service went a minor extra, the so-called "Prose of the Ass." Christ rode an ass into Jerusalem; Balaam (prominent in Miracle Plays) rode the ass who saw the Angel; beside the Christmas crèche stood, too, this humble patient beast of burden, from the time of the prophet Zechariah symbol of gentleness and peace; on an ass the Virgin rode to Egypt. (So well was the symbolism recognized that in the secular life of baronial halls, beside the armored horsemen-warriors, went the untrammeled "Fool"—who was no fool or coward, but the authorized critic even of the baron—upon his ass, wearing himself a cap with ass's ears.)

Therefore the custom grew that dumb, patient,

burden-bearing creatures be allowed a voice of praise to God. Hymns were current, sung as the people came to the closed doors, with the refrain after each line a sublimated bray! The tune used for first processional in the following office is of one of these. The symbolism of the Boy Bishop's humility can best be implied by his riding a tiny donkey up to the church doors.

The Boy Bishop is also of churchly, ancient origin and significance. Once a year, particularly in those great minsters where an hierarchy of clergy was mighty and where ecclesiastical dignity grew toward pomp, folk-custom upset all the feudal ranking and turned the hierarchy to inverse gradation, enthroning the humblest choirboy in the Bishop's chair and setting the Bishop to be his docile acolyte. The mediæval Church, if you please, was not going to allow the sacerdotalists to take themselves too seriously. Childlikeness was still the supreme virtue. The Magnificat came true—the meek must be exalted and mightiness must be brought low.

On Innocents' Day or Twelfth Night was the occasion.

Therefore with fine idealism the ceremony of the Boy Bishop was adopted by the Church. Only later, when the populace got out of hand and secular guilds grew dominant and sport was made of holy things, was horse play too rife and

the Feast of Fools, with its Boy Bishop, had to be suppressed.

The following office is a free adaptation of the Tollite Portas, the Prose of the Ass and of the Boy Bishop ceremonies. They are very assimilable. The usual features of the Tollite Portas and of the Sens Prose of the Ass are retained; the Sarum Office of the Boy Bishop provides only its central idea. The brief Office of the Beatitudes included is, of course, the ancient one, well known for a thousand years. The weaving together, the liturgical words, the symbolism of the Angel "ceremoniarius," etc. are all pure invention,—the filling in of details on the sketch only whose outlines are discernible after the centuries. The service is recommended for Children's Sunday, for Holy Innocents' Day, for Palm Sunday, for Ascensiontide, or for the Easter children's festival.

Why should not the child be the right king of our hearts, to be admitted with exultant praise to rule our worship as we come to God?

II

THE OFFICE

A

(OUTSIDE THE CHURCH)

The church doors are closed. The congregation waits outside. The church is empty. The choir marches around the church building and comes to the closed doors, the people opening a lane through which the choir comes. The minister, vested, leads the procession. Then comes the vested, adult choir. At the rear of the procession rides a little boy (old enough to memorize a few lines). If possible, let him be seated on the back of a little donkey, led by two reliable older boys and surrounded by a children's choir. The boys are in vestments. The hymn is to an ancient "Prose of the Ass" motif now to the tune called "Worgan" from "Lyra Davidica," originating in the fourteenth century. (In the Episcopal Hymnal the tune is set for Hymn 172). A precentor may sing the phrases of the stanzas and the choir and people sing the Alleluias.

Lord, forever at Thy side
Alleluia
Let my place and portion be;
Alleluia
Strip me of the robe of pride,
Alleluia
Clothe me with humility.
Alleluia.

Meekly may my soul receive
Alleluia
All Thy Spirit hath revealed.
Alleluia
By no subtleties beguiled,
Alleluia
On Thy faithful word I rest.
Alleluia.

Guard the helpless, seek the strayed;
Alleluia
Comfort troubles, banish grief:
Alleluia
In the might of God arrayed,
Alleluia
Scatter sin and unbelief.
Alleluia.

Holy Father, Holy Son,
Alleluia

Holy Spirit, Three in One!
Alleluia
Glory, as of old, to Thee
Alleluia
Now and evermore shall be.
Alleluia! Amen.

(*As the hymn ends, the minister* (*or bishop*) *knocks resoundingly on the closed door with a staff. If it is possible to have the Angel appear above the door* (*in a gallery*) *this is the ancient custom. If this is impossible,—and it is seldom feasible, let there be a high pedestal at one side of the door, to which the Angel may mount, coming from around the church. Or else let the Angel open the church door from within and stand in the doorway, on a pedestal sufficiently high to be seen. The Angel is clad in misty or shimmering silver. Possibly veiled. Wings are optional: they must be excellently made to bear close inspection.*)

THE ANGEL:

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall rise up in His holy place?

THE MINISTER:

Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart, and that hath not lift up his mind

unto vanity, nor sworn to deceive his neighbor.

THE ANGEL:

He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

This is the generation of them that seek Him: even of them that seek Thy face, O Jacob.

THE MINISTER:

Open me the gates of righteousness, that I may go into them and give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

THE ANGEL:

Art thou such as the Lord will receive? Them that are meek shall He guide in judgment: and such as are gentle, them shall he teach His way. But whoso hath a proud look and a high stomach, I will not suffer him. That which the world counteth honor or power or greatness crosseth not this threshold this day. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the House of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

All worldly judgments must we forswear before we enter here?

THE ANGEL:

Except ye be converted and become as little

children, verily I say unto you, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoso would be greatest let him become as a little child. The Father seeketh such to worship Him.

THE MINISTER:

We take a child and set him in our midst. A little child shall lead us.

(*The child is led forward and dismounts before the Angel.*)

THE ANGEL:

Put away from you, O ye people, all worldliness and pride, all false wisdom and self-seeking, and make this child the outward and visible sign of your inward spiritual being.

THE MINISTER:

Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart.

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

Prove me and examine my thoughts.

THE MINISTER:

Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me.

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

And lead me in the way everlasting.

THE MINISTER:

Rejoice greatly, behold thy King cometh unto thee: He is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the

foal of an ass. And He shall speak peace unto the heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea to sea. Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope.

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

A little child shall lead us. Suffer us as little children to come unto Thee, O God, and forbid us not.

THE BOY:

For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

(*Whereat all shall unite in the chanting of the 24th Psalm and of a part of the 118th, antiphonally; the Angel taking the versicles and the choir and people the responses, as follows:*)

THE ANGEL:

Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have wished you good luck, ye that are of the house of the Lord.

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

Open me the gates of righteousness: that I may go into them and give thanks unto the Lord.

THE ANGEL:

This is the gate of the Lord: the righteous shall enter into it.

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

This is the day which the Lord hath made: We will rejoice and be glad in it.

THE ANGEL:

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall rise up in His holy place?

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart: and that hath not lifted up his mind unto vanity, nor sworn to deceive his neighbor.

THE ANGEL:

He shall receive the blessing from the Lord: and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

This is the generation of them that seek him, even of them that seek thy face, O Jacob. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of Glory shall come in.

THE ANGEL:

Who is this King of Glory?

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

It is the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of Glory shall come in.

THE ANGEL:

Who is this King of Glory?

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

Even the Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory.

ALL:

Glory be to the Father
And to the Son
And to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and ever shall be,
World without end!

Amen!

(The doors swing wide: the angel leads the little child at the head of the procession, the choir follows, and after the choir come all the people, into the church. And as the processional enters, they sing an anthem or a hymn. Possible anthems would be "Unfold! Unfold, ye portals everlasting," by Gounod, or "Lift up your heads, O ye gates", from the "Messiah" (Handel). The following ancient hymn ascribed to St. Theodulf of Orleans:)

All glory, laud, and honor
To Thee, Redeemer King!
To Whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring.

The company of angels
Are praising Thee on high
And mortal men and all things
Created make reply.
All glory, laud and honor, etc.

To Thee before Thy passion
They sang their hymns of praise:
To Thee, now high exalted,
Our melody we raise.
All glory, laud and honor, etc.

Thou didst accept their praises:
Accept the prayers we bring,
Who in all good delightest,
Thou Good and Gracious King.
All glory, laud and honor, etc.

B

(INSIDE THE CHURCH)

(In the chancel shall be set a "bishop's chair," in a central and exalted position. In a church with high altar, outside the communion rail, of course. The Angel pauses below the choir steps, with the little boy. The choir is in its regular place, the congregation now in the pews. The minister, or bishop, seats himself in the "bishop's chair," facing the congregation. If the traditions of the given church allow it, let there be a candle-bearer and an incense-bearer (thurifer) on either side of him. The enthroned person should wear a mitre or a plain crown and should still

carry his staff of office. The more mediæval the vestments and appurtenances of the central group can be, the better.)

THE ANGEL (*to the enthroned minister*):

To thee is given power in the Church: beware lest the Church judge according to worldly judgments, seeking aught but simplicity and childlikeness. Remembering that the Lord Jesus, in the night he was betrayed, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself and began to wash the disciples' feet like a servant. Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth? Jesus said, "I am among you as one that serveth."

THE MINISTER (OR BISHOP) (*rising from the throne and kneeling*):

From all blindness of heart; from pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice and all uncharitableness,

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

Good Lord, deliver us, Thy Church!

THE MINISTER (OR BISHOP):

That it may please Thee to illuminate all bishops, priests and deacons (*or he may say, if appropriate to the church polity of this congregation, "All ministers and elders"*) with true knowledge and understanding of

Thy Word; and that by both their preaching and living they may set it forth and show it accordingly:

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

(*Enter a king or other mediæval officer of government, garbed with symbols of his power. He is about to seat himself upon the throne, when the Angel challenges him, saying:*)

THE ANGEL:

What is thy power and thine authority over us?

THE RULER:

I bear not the sword in vain. I am ruler over the people.

THE ANGEL:

Remember that the Lord Jesus said, "The Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as a child, and he that is chief, is he that doth serve."

THE RULER (*kneeling*):

From all inordinate and sinful affections, and from all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil,

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

Good Lord, deliver us, Thy people.

THE RULER:

That it may please Thee to bless and preserve all Christian rulers and magistrates, giving them grace to execute justice and to maintain truth:

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord!

(*Enter a scholar, robed in academic gown, with parchment, hood, and a great book. He is about to seat himself upon the throne, when the Angel challenges him, saying:*)

THE ANGEL:

What is thy wisdom and thy learning, to give thee authority over us?

THE SCHOLAR:

To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to give subtilty unto the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion, to understand the words of the wise and their dark sayings.

THE ANGEL:

In the name of Him Who as a child was found in the midst of the doctors, both hearing and asking them questions, hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the wisdom of God. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this

world's conceit, let him become a fool that he may be wise. Be not puffed up; The Spirit it is that searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. Therefore become a fool in Christ that ye may be wise. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

THE SCHOLAR (*kneeling*):

From all false doctrine, heresy and schism, from hardness of heart and contempt of Thy Word and Commandment,

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

Good Lord, deliver us, Thy children.

THE SCHOLAR:

That it may please Thee to give to all Thy people increase of grace to hear meekly Thy Word and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit,

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE:

We beseech Thee to hear us, Good Lord.

THE ANGEL (*to the child by his side*):

What saith God's Holy Word?

THE CHILD (*led to the Bible, and reading therefrom, a step being provided that he may be seen by the congregation.*) *St. Matthew* xviii: *1-5, 10:*

The disciples came unto Jesus, saying,
"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set Him in the midst of them,

And said, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

And whoso shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me. . . .

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven."

THE ANGEL (*beside the child*):

God grant us the Child's heart in the midst of us! For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

(*He leads the child to the throne and seats him there. During the anthem which follows, the scholar lays his book and parchment at the child's feet, the king lays his scepter and crown beside them, and the minister puts upon the child's head the mitre or crown he wore, and gives to him his staff.*)

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE (*rising, sing the Magnificat*):

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for ever.

Glory be to the Father
And to the Son
And to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning,
Is now and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

(*Then shall the Boy Bishop bid the people to prayer, reading from a service-book held before him by the kneeling minister, ruler, and scholar, the ancient office of the Beatitudes, the people saying the responses or the choir and people chanting them.*)

THE ANGEL (*bringing the boy to the chancel steps and facing the people*):

Hosanna, blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

THE CHOIR AND PEOPLE (*singing*):

Hosanna to the living Lord!
Hosanna to the Incarnate word!
To Christ, Creator, Saviour, King,
Let earth, let Heaven, Hosanna sing!
Hosanna, Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!

But chiefest, in our cleansed breast,
Eternal, bid Thy Spirit rest,
And make our secret soul to be
A temple pure and worthy Thee:
Hosanna, Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!

THE ANGEL (*behind the throne*):

Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the High and Holy Place; with him also that is of the contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

THE BOY (*shall then rehearse the Beatitudes, the people kneeling*):

Jesus went into the mountain; and his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

THE PEOPLE:

Amen. Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

THE BOY:

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

THE PEOPLE:

Amen. Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

THE BOY:

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

THE PEOPLE:

Amen. Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

THE BOY:

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

THE PEOPLE:

Amen. Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

THE BOY:

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

THE PEOPLE:

Amen. Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

THE BOY:

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

THE PEOPLE:

Amen. Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

THE BOY:

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

THE PEOPLE:

Amen. Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

After which all shall say The Lord's Prayer. And the Boy-Bishop *shall say this prayer and blessing:*

O Almighty God, who out of the mouths of little children hast ordained praise, so strengthen us by Thy grace, that by the innocency of our lives we may glorify Thy holy Name, both now and evermore!

Amen.

THE GOD OF ALL BEAUTY OF HOLINESS KEEP OUR HEARTS HUMBLE AND HOLY AND CHILD-LIKE AND SUFFER US TO COME UNTO HIM, THROUGH HIM WHO WAS AND IS THE CHILD OF BETHLEHEM, EMMANUEL, GOD WITH US!

AMEN.

THE ANCIENT

TROPE

CALLED THE

"Quem Quæritis"

THE EARLIEST FORM OF

MYSTERY PLAY

COMBINED WITH THE CONTEMPORARY

"DEPOSITIO CRUCIS" AND "ELEVATIO CRUCIS."

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED

✠

"QUEM QUÆRITIS"

HISTORICAL NOTE:

The "Quem Quæritis" is the very earliest form of liturgical drama in the Christian Church. From the eighth century it can be traced, gradually expanding from the primitive form in which the Marys and the angel at the tomb have only the Gospel quotations for dialogue, to the expanded version wherein Pilate sets the watch, the soldiers keep guard, the Marys come to the Tomb on Easter morning, the discovery is made, Peter and John arrive, and the Master appears to the Magdalen. Originally a part of the Easter matins, it ultimately became a service in itself.

But always, in every form, the Easter Sepulcher is the focal point of the office. In the Sepulcher the swathed cross from the high altar was reverently deposited on Good Friday, to remain there until Easter morning. Before the church doors were opened on that day it was stripped of its linens and restored to its proper place. When the people were in their places and the service begun, the "Quem Quæritis" trope took place, with priests to enact the rôles of the three women and the angel.

In the version of the service utilized here, the

"Depositio Crucis" is combined with the "Elevatio" and the "Quem Quæritis." The first two episodes may of course be omitted. It is not likely that they will be worth doing separately and at their historic moments on Good Friday and Easter. If they are combined with the "Quem Quæritis" to give the complete ceremonial of the cross, a word of explanation should be said to inform the congregation of the original timing, that they may know at one point that "two days elapse" and at another that an hour or so is to be imagined as interim.

The form of the service utilized as the basis of this translation is about midway in the development of the Office. The particular documents of the "Quem Quæritis" which provide the following version are the Regularis Concordia of St. Ethelwold, A.D. 965, a manuscript of the thirteenth century of Orléans, France, and a Sarum Processional of the fourteenth century from Dublin. No liberties of invention have been taken, since the actual liturgies are ample.

The ancient Church felt no impropriety in having the Christ rôle assumed by an officiant. Modern sensibilities are much more intense on this point; wherefore the present adaptation makes bold to omit the person of the Master and to substitute a voice, simultaneous with a light thrown on the altar cross, as the symbol of His presence.

I

"DEPOSITIO CRUCIS"

The moment for the Office of the Cross having come, the church is darkened. If candles are upon the altar they are solemnly extinguished. Solemn organ music.

> (*Four men, clad as monastics, go to the altar and lift down the Cross, laying it upon a cushion before the altar.*
> *While the choir sings the following hymn the four men then bring the Cross on its cushion to the front of the choir or pulpit-platform. They kneel, two on either side, the Cross between them. This hymn is based on a devotion by Anselm. It is No. 155 in the Episcopal Hymnal.*)

Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended
That man to judge Thee hath in hate pretended?
By foes derided, by Thine own rejected,
O most afflicted!

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon Thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone Thee.
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied Thee:
I crucified Thee!

For me, kind Jesus, was Thy incarnation,
Thy mortal sorrow; and Thy life's oblation:
Thy death of anguish and Thy bitter passion,
For my salvation.

Therefore, kind Jesus, since I cannot pay Thee,
I do adore Thee and will ever pray Thee
Think on Thy pity and Thy love unswerving:
Not my deserving. Amen.

(*They rise, remove their sandals, and each one "doth creepe upon his knees unto the Saide Crosse and most reverentlie kisse it." Two of the monastics standing, swing censers above the Cross; while the other two, kneeling, tenderly swathe the Cross with cerements of white cloth.*

The organ playing a slow and solemn march, the four monastics carry the Cross, horizontal on its cushion, to the Sepulcher. The Sepulcher is built of large service books. It is either upon a side altar, or beside the altar, or at one side of the church at the front. It should be where it is visible to all, and is preferably not at the main altar, since a procession to or from it is an effective item of the service. They lay the Cross into the Sepulcher, kneel for prayer before it, and light two tall candles there.

They retire. If desired, these same four may now change their vestments and prepare to act in the "Quem Quæritis.")

This ends the "Depositio Crucis." To denote the passing of the time until Easter morning there should be silence, possibly darkness, possibly an intoned,—

"Here endeth the entombment of the Cross."

In which case the Elevation of the Cross may be signaled by an intoned,

"Here beginneth the Elevation of the Cross."

(*The congregation and choir kneel when the monastics do, rising with the beginning of the "Elevatio."*)

II

ELEVATIO CRUCIS

(*If the Selpucher is beside the main altar let the choir come from its stalls and stand across the chancel, facing the altar, screening what takes place there. If the Sepulcher is in the side chapel, let the choir go to the entrance of the chapel and await the officiants, the choir singing some an-*

cient Easter hymn, such as "The strife is o'er."

During this time the officiants shall remove the Cross from the Sepulcher, remove the cloths which are about it, leaving the cloths within the Sepulcher. Then carrying the Cross upright, two of them shall come from the Sepulcher, two shall carry the lighted candles, and the choir shall go in processional formation around the church and up into the chancel, singing a joyous hymn all the while. If the service is desired to be accurately historical, the Cross should be carried beneath a canopy on four poles, each borne by a monastic, in the center of the procession.

On reaching the chancel, the choir should divide and allow the Cross to pass through into the sanctuary, where it will be set upright in its proper place. Flowers shall be placed about it and the two candles may be placed upon the altar, and other tapers may be brought and lighted. The choir returns to its stalls and ends its hymn.)

III

"QUEM QUÆRITIS"

(During the while the procession goes about the church from the Sepulcher, one

officiant, vested, the "Regularis Concordia" says "in an alb as if to take part in the Service," shall seat himself before the Sepulcher, with a palm in his hand.

As the hymn ends, three other vested officiants shall come forward from the rear of the church, carrying incense and spices, "slowlie in the menner of seeking somethinge." If it is preferred, these three may be women, but if so they should be habited as nuns. The Magdalen was usually vested in red.

Pausing in the center aisle, they begin their mourning. The "Planctus" of the Marys and that of Mary the mother of Jesus were sometimes a separate office, for Good Friday, or Easter even.

One after another they chant:)

THE FIRST MARY:

Alas! the Good Shepherd hath been slain,
He Who was without a spot or stain!
O pain forlornful!

THE SECOND MARY:

Alas, indeed! mad folk of Jewry,
What madness lashed ye so to fury,
O people scornful?

THE THIRD MARY:

Alas! the Master true is dead,
Who to the dead gave life instead,
O death most mournful!

(*The three then advance to the head of the aisle.*)

THE FIRST MARY:

O wherefore did ye, blindly impious,
Condemn the Holy Jesus, piteous?
O ire, so hateful!

THE SECOND MARY:

How hath the Saviour deserved to die,
Whom bitterest fear doth crucify?
Ah, men ungrateful!

THE THIRD MARY:

In misery dire what can we do?
Much more than copious tears are due!
O pain too fateful!

(*They turn toward the Sepulcher, but do not yet perceive the Angel.*)

THE FIRST MARY:

Let us therefore make all speed,
Serving now His last sad need,
With hearts' devotion.

THE SECOND MARY:

Aromatic spices rare
Shall anoint His body fair;
Our costliest lotion!

THE THIRD MARY:

Spikenard pungent, pure and fresh,
Must preserve His silver flesh!
Telling emotion!

(*They then approach the Sepulcher more*

closely, "as if seeking, and all singing together this verse":)

THE WOMEN:

But without some aid how may
From the tomb door roll away
The heavy stone?

("To whom shall the Angel respond, seated at the Sepulcher, clothed in an alb gilded over, his head veiled, holding in his left hand a palm, and let him say in a modulated and very grave voice":)

THH ANGEL:

Whom seek ye in the Sepulcher,
O followers of the Christ?

(or else, to give the clue to the name of this office, the Angel may say this question in Latin:

Quem Quæritis in sepulchro,
O Christicolæ?)

THE WOMEN:

Jesus of Nazareth,
Which was crucified,
O Heavenly One!

THE ANGEL:

Why seek ye the living among the dead?
He is not here: He is risen, as He said
To His disciples.
Do you not remember that in Galilee
He once foretold all lovingly to thee
That it must needs be that Christ dies

And that the third day He would rise
In power and glory?

(*The women then turn toward the congregation, and standing before the Sepulcher, they speak to it, saying or intoning together:*)

THE MARYS:

To the Sepulcher of our Lord we came
In anguish: God's angel, seated there, doth claim
That Christ is risen from the dead!

(*But they are not convinced. Incredulous and gropingly, the first and second Marys depart from the Sepulcher, going out of the nearest door from the church. The angel stands aside. Mary Magdalen remains. She goes to the Sepulcher, passing the angel with shrinking awe, and peers into the Sepulcher. She takes the linen cloth. Coming out, she goes to the choir steps (or pulpit-platform) and, spreading her hands wide, says or chants, in appearance of agony of heart:*)

MARY MAGDALEN:

Alas! the sorrow! Alas! The fearful anguish!
Bereft of His sweet presence must I languish!
Oh, who hath borne the precious body from the tomb?

(*Up the center aisle come Peter and John, habited in ceremonial vestments. They pause below the Magdalen, who thus addresses them:*)

They have taken away my Lord
And I know not where they have laid Him!
An empty tomb is our reward,
And linen cloths wherein they swathed him!

(*The Magdalen remains at the choir steps or pulpit-platform. Peter and John look at each other aghast. They hasten toward the Sepulcher, John running ahead of Peter. John pauses outside; Peter goes close to the Sepulcher, or into the chapel where it is. Turning to the people standing at the Sepulcher, John and Peter hold the following colloquy:*)

JOHN:

Astounding is this which we have seen!
Is the Lord stolen? What can it mean?

PETER:

Ah no! While alive He once foretold
The grave would be pow'rless Him to hold!

JOHN:

Oh, but wherefore hath He left behind
The linen cerements which we now find?

PETER:

What need hath He, arising
From the dead, with such encumbrance?

Left us for proof surprising
Of His freedom and effulgence!
(*With by-play of incredulous joy, Peter and John depart from the Sepulcher. Exeunt.*
The angel—two if desired, to help the balance of the "picture," and in accordance, too, with one Gospel story—enters the sanctuary and stands beside the altar. The Magdalen, unconscious of this approach, bewails her loneliness and disillusion:)

THE MAGDALEN:

What deathly grief! What racking pain!
For my reft Lord all tears are vain!
Who thieved His holy body dear away?
(*The Angel,—or angels,—speak to the Magdalen, with tender solicitude.*)

THE ANGEL:

Woman, why weepest thou?

THE MAGDALEN:

Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him.

THE ANGEL:

Weep not, Mary! Your Lord is risen! Alleluia!

THE MAGDALEN (*awed and slowly believing*):

My heart flames with longing tense
To see my Master.
I seek Him: He is gone from hence!
Where is my Master?

(*With outstretched arms she pleads with the angel. There is a moment of silence. The angel points to the altar-cross, which is suddenly flooded with light. A voice speaks:*)

THE MASTER (*invisible, symbolized by the cross*):

Woman, why weepest thou?

THE MAGDALEN (*sobbing*):

Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will come and take Him away.

THE MASTER (*a voice, speaking with infinite tenderness the single word*):

Mary!

THE MAGDALEN (*Sinking to her knees; enraptured*):

Rabboni!!

(*She falls prostrate. The light on the Cross goes out. Mary arises, her face alight. She turns to the choir and people, addressing them earnestly:*)

Rejoice with me, all ye who adore the Master; for He Whom I sought hath shown Himself to me alive: while I wept yonder at the tomb I saw the Lord! Alleluia!

THE ANGEL (*To all*):

Come, see the place where the Lord was laid.
Alleluia!
Be not afraid!
Be ye no more of countenance sad!

Tell out exulting the tidings so glad:
Hasten to Galilee, just as He bade;
There shall ye meet Him, in radiance clad!

Go quickly and tell His disciples that
He is risen from the dead. Alleluia!

(*The Angel withdraws. The two Marys enter again; as also do Peter and John. They come to the choir, and stand either side of the Magdalen, facing her. To them and to the choir and congregation the Magdalen proclaims:*)

THE MAGDALEN:

Our Lord is risen from the Sepulcher;
The Lord Who hung upon the cross, for us!
Alleluia!

(*The other Marys and Peter hold up the linen cloth, that all may see.*)

THE MARYS:

Behold and see: this is the linen cloth
Wherewith the blessed body of the Lord was swathed.

PETER AND JOHN:

Abandoned, left behind it lay,
Within the empty tomb.

(*All five abreast, they carry the cloth to the altar, kneel an instant, rise and place the cloth upon the altar, kneel an instant, rise, turn toward the people and in turn intone:*)

THE MAGDALEN:

The Lord of Lords is risen today!

ONE MARY:

In vain, in vain they sealed the stone!

THE OTHER MARY:

The King of Angels is risen today!

PETER:

Out of deep Hades He brings forth His own!

JOHN:

The door of the Kingdom of Heaven stands wide!

THE CHOIR:

Alleluia!

The Lord is risen today!

THE MARYS, PETER AND JOHN (*in unison*):

The Unconquerable One!
The Invincible Lord!
The Christ!
The Son of God!
Jesus is risen from the dead!
Alleluia!

(*At which the choir* (*and people?*) *shall sing a Te Deum! Preferably a plain-song Te Deum, for accuracy of "period."*)

ALL:

We praise Thee, O God, etc.

THE MIRACLE PLAY
OF
Melchizedek, Abraham and Isaac

(BEING THE
PLAY OF THE BARBERS AND WAX-CHANDLERS
FROM THE CHESTER CYCLE)

✣

THE MIRACLE PLAY OF MELCHIZEDEK, ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

THE Miracle Play of "Melchizedek, Abraham and Isaac" was the most popular Old Testament one, from among the many in the traditional cycle which ran from the Creation through to New Testament subjects. With Noah's Flood, in which the peasant sense of humor dwelt on the reluctance of Noah's wife to embark, and with the processional play of all the prophets, it was practically churchwide in its appeal. To the modern mind, however, it is immeasurably superior. Its allegory is searching; its human pathos is moving. The analogy of the sacrifice of God's Son by a Father obedient to the compulsion of redemptive love, and the shadowy figure of Melchizedek, Priest-King of Salem, "without birth or death forever," as the analogic figure of the Christ of the Upper Room aforetime, administering the eternal Sacrament of God's Self-giving—these did not escape the original generations which utilized this play, and they are dear to our developed mystic sense, along with their quaintness of presentation.

The version used as the basis for this script is that of the Chester barbers and wax-chandlers. The York Play, though earlier and more liturgic,

is marred by making Isaac thirty years old rather than a boy——in parallelism with the thirty-year-old Jesus on Calvary. The Brome play, which is much the best for human pathos (and which may be had in such acting versions as that by Mr. Samuel Eliot), is nevertheless further removed from worship-drama by being more theatric, demanding no congregational mysticism. In the Chester version the Expositor is beautifully employed to guarantee the spiritual participation of the congregation. It is marvelous that this play could have persisted so unspoiled through to the days when the Guild plays had left the church for the market place and the journeying pageant-wagons and lay control. Many another has not been kept so sacred—evidence, perhaps, of its intrinsic spirituality.

THE SETTING

To adapt this to the Church is very simple. The following suggestions are capable of much development:

Let there be two tall screens at either side of the chancel or pulpit-platform. In liturgic churches it is quite according to precedent to utilize the space within the communion rail and the altar steps for the portion of the play in which God and His Angel take their rôles. There is an opening between these screens (through which the

altar can be seen?) wide enough to display the Angel and his wings. Behind the screens, one on each side, are spotlights, arranged to be turned on from outside. A pedestal is in the center of this opening, high enough that its base may be visible above the altar used by Abraham, presently noted. Across the front of this pedestal a fleece, sufficiently stuffed to simulate a lamb. If there is no entrance door into the space behind the screens which the Angel may use, the Angel will need to enter before the play begins.

Before the opening between the screens is a long, couchlike altar, painted to simulate rude stones. It should be about three feet high, with a step at one side by which Isaac mounts.

The choir should be of men, clad in monastic garb. The seats for the choir should be below the altar or on either side at right angles to the altar.

Below the chancel steps there is a seat for the Expositor, perhaps on a small platform of its own.

A censer with burning incense and a small fagot of light wood should be in readiness at a convenient place in the chancel. A scarf should be on the altar, and two short pieces of rope. The chalice and paten should either be in position upon the regular church altar or be brought in by Melchizedek. One of Abraham's attendants brings in a large basin, covered with a piece of rich drapery.

There should be a brief preliminary service before the play begins.

(*The choir and Expositor enter up the center aisle. At the front of the chancel the Expositor turns to face the congregation. Four choir men stand in a row behind him, likewise facing the people. Holding lighted candles. The Expositor raises his hand for attention:*)

EXPOSITOR:

All peace, lordlings that are present,
And hearken now with good intent,
All ye of this company:
For Abraham, through God's good grace,
He is come forth into this place,
To show you of his story.
This play, forsooth, begun shall be
In worship of the Trinity
As should be done today.
No longer here should I be seen,
Farewell, my lordlings, for I mean
No hindrance of your play.

(*The Expositor descends the steps again and sits in the chair at the head of the center aisle. Two of the candle-bearing men accompany him, standing silently behind his chair. The other two stand at the front end of the choir seats, immobile. The choir sings the hymn, "The God of Abram Praise," which is a Christian adap-*

tation of the ancient Hebrew hymn, sung to the traditional Kil Nidrol tune, now called "Leoni":)

The God of Abram praise,
Who reigns enthroned above.

(*During the final stanza Abraham enters, up the center aisle. He is accompanied by four attendants. As he draws near, Melchizedek, clad in misty gray, enters at the back of the chancel and stands before the altar, facing the congregation and awaiting Abraham. Abraham mounts the steps to the chancel, kneels a moment, rises and faces the congregation, raising his arms and lifting his face toward heaven.*)

ABRAHAM:

Ah, Thou high God, granter of Grace,
That ending nor beginning has,
I thank Thee, Lord, that to me has
Today been given victory.
To worship Thee I am command;
That four kings of uncouth land
Today has sent into my hand,
Through Thy might and mastery.
Therefore of all that I can win
To give Thee tithe I will begin,

When I to home soon shall come in.
This, Lord, is Thy due.
Melchizedek, that here King is
And God's priest also, I wis;
Thy tithe will I give to him of this;
As to Thee Thyself I do.
(*Abraham turns and sees Melchizedek. He points him out to one of his attendants, bidding him approach Melchizedek as his messenger.*)

THE MESSENGER (*coming to Melchizedek*):
My Lord, my king's tidings are right,
Your heart for to gladden and light:
Abraham hath slain in fight
Four kings, since out he went.
Here he will be this same night,
And riches with him enough dight.
I heard him thank God Almight
For grace He had him sent.

MELCHIZEDEK (*stretching his hand to heaven*):
Ah, blest be God Who is but One!
To Abraham I will be gone
Worshipfully, and then anon
Mine office to fulfill,
Shall give to him both bread and wine,
For grace of God is him within:
For he hath earned the love divine!
He doeth God's true will.

THE MESSENGER (*pointing to the altar*):
Sir, there is wine all pure and clear

And thereto bread of whiteness dear
To present to him in good manere
For reward of his faith.

MELCHIZEDEK:

To God indeed he is full dear,
For all things by his prayer
He hath, who knows no fear;
God grant to him His grace.
(*He comes to Abraham and offers him a silver chalice and white bread on a paten. Abraham kneels upright.*)
Abraham, welcome shalt thou be,
God's grace is fully in thee,
Blessed ever must thou be,
Whom God can reach.
I have brought, as thou mayst see
Bread and wine for thy degree:

MESSENGER:

Receive this sacrament of me
I thee beseech.

ABRAHAM:

Sir king and priest of God's own sway,
Thy gift to me is welcome aye.
God hath holpen me today
Unworthy though I be.
Of my new-won substance thus I lay
Before thy feet the best I may:
The tenth I offer thee.
(*An attendant lays a covered casket or tray before Melchizedek.*)

MELCHIZEDEK:

Your offering, sir, take I
And honour it devoutly,
For much good it may signify
In time that is coming.
Your offering welcome is
And well I know forsooth, I wis,
That fully God's will it is
That is now done today.

(*The Expositor rises from his seat and holds up his hand for attention. He speaks to the congregation: Abraham and all the other actors standing motionless.*)

EXPOSITOR:

Lordlings, what this doth signify
I will expound openly
That all present hereby
May know what this may be.
This offering, I say verament
Signifieth the New Testament
Which now is used to good intent
Throughout all Christianity.
For since Christ died on the rood-tree
With bread and wine Him worship we
In our chief sacrament.
But by aforetime's prophecy
To figure forth God's gift to be,
Melchizedek made revealment.
By Abraham understand I may
The Father of Heaven in good fay;

Melchizedek His priest for aye
To minister that sacrament
That Christ ordained on Shrove Thursday
In bread and wine to honour Him aye;
This signifieth, the truth to say
God's gift forever present.

(*He sits. A brilliant light shines between the screens, or else an illuminated cross against the background there glows bright. Melchizedek remains.*)

THE VOICE OF GOD:

Abraham, my servant, I say to thee
Thy help and succor I will be,
For thy good deed much pleaseth Me,
I tell thee surely.

ABRAHAM (*kneeling again, face toward the congregation*):

Lord, one thing that Thou wilt see
That I pray for with heart free.
Grant me, Lord, if it may be,
A child to love dearly.
I have no child, nor foul nor fair,
To bless my home, to be my heir;
Grieving, I go in sorrowing care.
On me, Lord, have mercy!

THE VOICE OF GOD:

My friend Abraham, trust in Me.
A son I will indeed send to thee,
Begotten of thy body.
Abraham, do as I thee say;

Look up and count, an so thou may,
The stars a-standing in Heaven away,
Impossible is it surely.
No more shalt thou, for no need
Number of thy descent the seed
That thou shalt have withouten fear;
Thou art to me so dear.
Wherefore, Abraham, servant free,
Look that thou be true to Me,
And promise here I make with Thee
Thy seed to multiply.
Kings of thy seed shall the world see,
Thy children's children shall blessèd be,
And One Child of great degree
All mankind shall glorify.

ABRAHAM (*rising*):

Lord, already in good fay,
I bless Thy name for aye and aye,
I trust Thy promise made today,
How precious shall my own son be!
(*Abraham recieves the bread and wine of Melchizedek, partaking thereof most reverently. Then Melchizedek withdraws. Also the attendants withdraw.*)

THE EXPOSITOR (*rising from his seat*):

Lordlings, all take good intent,
What betokens this same covenant
That the faithful shall inherit, verament,
The earth; born of faith's sacrament.
Also God promises here

To Abraham, his servant dear,
So many seed that in no manere
Numbered it might be.
And the One Child, mankind to save,
That was Jesus Christ the brave,
Born of our Lady in Beth'lem's cave,
Of Ab'ram's own posterity.

(*He sits. The choir sings the following two stanzas*):

THE CHOIR:

O Thou before the world began
Ordained a sacrifice for man.
And by the eternal Spirit made
An offering in the sinner's stead:
Our everlasting Priest Art Thou,
Pleading Thy death for sinners now.

Thy offering still continues new
Before the righteous Father's view:
Thyself the Lamb forever slain,
Thy priesthood doth unchanged remain;
Thy years, O God, can never fail,
Nor Thy blest work within the veil.

THE VOICE OF GOD:

Abraham! my servant Abraham!

ABRAHAM:

Lo, Lord, already I am here.

THE VOICE OF GOD:

Take Isaac, thy son so dear
That thou lovest best of all,

And in sacrifice offer him to Me
Upon that hill beside thee!
Abraham, I will that it so be
For aught that may befall!

(*Abraham is aghast. He speaks incredulously.*)

ABRAHAM:

My Lord, to Thee is my intent
Ever to be obedient.
That son that Thou to me hast sent
Offer I must to Thee?
And fulfill Thy commandment
With obedient will, as I am kent?
High God, Lord Omnipotent
Thy bidding done shall be.
My household and my family, each one
Lingers at home, but all and one
Save Isaac shall with me gone
To the hill here beside.

(*Isaac enters, up the center aisle. Abraham sees him coming and silently laments. Then he addresses him.*)

ABRAHAM:

Make thee ready, my darling,
For we must do a little thing.
This wood upon thy back thou bring,

(*He lifts a fagot of wood to show it to Isaac. Then puts it down.*)

We must not long abide.

A sword and fire I will take,
(*He shows his sword and takes up a smoking censer.*)
For sacrifice I must make.
God's bidding will I not forsake
But aye obedient be.

ISAAC (*coming up the steps to Abraham. He speaks blithely*):
Father, I am all ready
To do your bidding meekly,
To bear this wood full bound am I,
As you command me.

ABRAHAM (*in anguish, spreading his hands in benediction*):
O Isaac, Isaac, my darling dear,
My blessing now I give thee here;
Take up this fagot with good cheer,
Upon thy back it bring,
And fire with me I will take,

ISAAC (*coming close to his father's side, trustfully*):
Your bidding I will not forsake.
Father, I will never slake
To fulfill your bidding.
(*He takes up the fagot of wood, making sport of its weight. Together they walk toward the altar.*)

ABRAHAM (*as they start*):
Now, Isaac, son, go we our way
To yonder mountain, if that we may.

ISAAC:

My dear father, I will essay
To follow you full fain.

ABRAHAM (*lagging behind. Speaking to himself*):

Oh! my heart will break in three,
To hear thy words I have pity.
As thou wilt, Lord, so must it be.
(*They reach the altar.*)
Lay down thy fagot, my own son dear!

ISAAC (*dropping it, and straightening his back*):

All ready, father. Lo, it is here.
But why make you so heavy cheer?
Are you anything adread?
Father, if it be your will,
Where is the beast that we shall kill?
(*He looks about.*)

ABRAHAM (*stammering*):

There is none, son, upon this hill
That I see here in this stead.
(*Ruefully feels the edge of his sword.*)

ISAAC:

Father, I am full sore afraid
To see you bare this naked sword.
(*He blanches and cringes.*)
Father, tell me, ere I go
Whether I shall have harm or no.

ABRAHAM:

Ah, dear God, what is my woe!
Thou bursts my heart in sunder.

ISAAC (*clutching his father's coat*):

Father, tell me of this case,
Why you your drawn sword have
And bare it naked in this place.
Thereof I have much wonder.

ABRAHAM (*with strangled sobs*):

Isaac, son, peace! I pray thee.
Thou breaks my heart even in three.

ISAAC (*embracing his father tightly and compelling him to look him in the eyes*):

I pray you, father, leave nothing from me,
But tell me what you think!

ABRAHAM (*after a moment of tense silence*):

O Isaac, Isaac, I must—thee—*kill!*

ISAAC (*releasing his embrace and stepping back stunned and incredulous*):

Alas! father, is that *your* will,
Your own child here for to spill,
Upon this hill's brink?
(*Suddenly he kneels to his father, tumultuously pleading.*)
If I have trespassed in any degree,
With a rod you may beat me.
Put up your sword, if your will be,
For I am but a child.

ABRAHAM (*kneeling to face his boy, still on his knees*):

Oh, my son! I am sorry
To do thee this fearful thing,
But God's commandment must I do!

ISAAC (*rising and backing away, standing by the altar, forlorn*):

Would God my mother were here with me!
She would kneel upon her knee,
Praying you, father, if it might be,
For to save my life.

ABRAHAM (*rising and facing the boy across the altar*):

Oh, comely creature, if I do not kill
I grieve my God and that full ill.
I may not work against His will
But ever obedient be!
(*He leans forward, beseechingly.*)
Oh, Isaac, son, to thee I say:
God hath commanded me this day
Sacrifice—there is no nay—
To make—of thy—body!

ISAAC (*aghast and realizing the truth*):

Is it—God's will—I—should be—slain?
(*He steadies himself and swallows hard.*)
You must do God's bidding.
Father, tell my mother of nothing.

ABRAHAM:

For sorrow I may my hands wring;
Thy mother I cannot comfort.
O Isaac, blessed mayst thou be!
Almost my wit I lose for thee,
The blood of thy body so free,
I feel full loth to shed.

ISAAC:

Father, since you must needs do so,

Kneeling on my knees two,
Your blessing on me spread!
(*He kneels before Abraham.*)

ABRAHAM (*solemnly, above him*):
My blessing, dear son, give I thee
And thy mother's with heart so free.
The blessing of the Trinity,
My dear son, on thee light.

ISAAC (*rising and going to the altar*):
Father, I pray you hide mine eyen,
That I may not see your sword so keen;
Your stroke, father, I would not seen,
Lest I against it thrill.

ABRAHAM (*following him reluctantly to the altar*):
My dear son Isaac, speak no more;
Thy words make my heart full sore.

ISAAC (*lifting the wood to the altar and spreading it there*):
O dear father, wherefore? Wherefore?
Since I must needs be dead,
One thing I would you pray,
As few strokes as you may
When you smite off my head.

ABRAHAM:
Thy meekness, child, makes me afraid.

ISAAC:
O dear father, do away
Your making so mickle moan!
Now truly, father, this talking
Doth but prolong the tarrying.

I pray you come and make ending
And let me hence go!

ABRAHAM:

My child, that art so sweet
Thou must be bound now, hands and feet.
(*He binds the lad's feet, then his hands. The boy sits on the altar's edge.*)

ISAAC:

Ah, father, we must no more meet
By aught that I can see:
Do with me just as you will
God's commandment to fulfill,
For so it needs must be.

Father, greet well my kindred young,
And pray my mother for her blessing.
I come no more under her wing:
(*His voice breaks.*)
Farewell for ever and aye!
O father, I cry you mercy,
Of that I have trespassed to thee,
Forgiven, father, that it may be,
Until doom's day.

ABRAHAM (*wringing his hands*):

I do forgive thee here.
Lo, my dear son, here shalt thou lie.
Unto my work now must I hie.
I had as lief myself to die
As thou, my darling dear.

ISAAC:

Father, if you be to me kind
About my head a kerchief bind.
(*Abraham puts a scarf about Isaac's eyes.*)

ABRAHAM:

Farewell, my sweet son of grace!

ISAAC (*lying down*):

I pray you, father, turn down my face,
For I am full sore adread.

ABRAHAM (*going behind the altar, facing the congregation*):

To do this deed I am sorry.

ISAAC:

Yea, Lord, to Thee I call and cry:
On my soul may Thou have mercy,
Heartily I Thee pray.

ABRAHAM:

Lord, I would fain work Thy will.
This young innocent that lies so still
It wellnigh seems I cannot kill
By any manner of way.

ISAAC (*procrastinating*):

My dear father, I you pray,
Let me take my clothes away,
For shedding blood on them today,
At my last ending.

ABRAHAM (*nerving himself and lifting his sword*):

Heart! if thou wouldst break in three,
Thou shalt never master me;

I can no longer stop for thee;
My God, I must not grieve.

ISAAC:

Ah, mercy, father! Why tarry you so?
Smite off my head and let me go!
I pray you rid me of my woe.
For now I take my leave.

ABRAHAM (*breaking down, kneeling abjectly, facing the congregation over the altar, and his son*):

Ah, son! My heart hath burst in me
To hear thee speak such words to me.
Jesus, on me Thou have pity!

(*He then steels himself, picks up his sword, and steps around the altar, back to the congregation.*)

ISAAC:

Almighty God, in majesty,
My soul I offer unto thee.
Lord, to it be kind.

(*Abraham lifts his sword at last to smite. As the sword hovers at the peak of its arc there is a blaze of light, and the Angel, who has entered the space between the screens and mounted the pedestal, is illuminated by the spotlights. The Angel calls, sharply.*)

THE ANGEL:

Abraham, my servant dear!

ABRAHAM:

Lo, Lord! I am all ready here.

THE ANGEL:

Lay not thy sword in any manner
On Isaac, thy dear darling!
Nay, do thou him no annoy!
For thou dreadest God well, see I;
That of thy son hast no mercy
To fulfill his bidding.
Of his bidding thou doest aye
To do thy son to death today
Isaac to thee so dear!
Therefore God hath sent by me in fay
A lamb into this place to pay.
Lo, it is right here.
(*He points to his feet, where the lamb lies.*)

ABRAHAM (*his sword clattering to the ground, sobs of relief racking him*):

Ah, Lord of Heaven and King of bliss:
Thy bidding I shall do, ye wis.
(*He lifts Isaac, unbinds and embraces him. He points to the lamb.*)
Sacrifice here to me sent is,
And all, Lord, through Thy grace.
To Thee offered it shall be,
Anon, right in this place.
(*Awed by the Angel's presence, he goes and gets the lamb and lays it on the altar, and sets the censer amid the wood, where*

it sends up its smoke. Abraham and Isaac kneel upright, back to the congregation, Abraham with his arms tight about the lad.)

ANGEL:

God by Himself doth swear,
For thou hast been obedient ever,
And spared not thy son so dear,
To fulfill His bidding.
Thou shalt be blest; thou art worthy.
All nations evermore shall be
Blessed through Him Who comes of thee,
And saved through thy seed.

(*Abraham and Isaac rise; they come forward to the step above the Expositor's chair. The choir ranges itself in a straight row behind them, on the top step, candles held high, flames in a line. The Angel remains illuminated.*)

THE EXPOSITOR (*rising*):

Lordlings, the signification
Of this deed of devotion,
An' you will, it is shewn,
May turn you to much good.
This deed you see done in this place,
In example of Jesus done it was,
That for to win mankind grace
Was sacrificed on the rood.
By Abraham ye must understand
The Father of Heaven Omnipotand,

Who with His own Son's blood that band
Hath loosed which Satan wrought.
By Isaac understand we may
Jesus, Who was obedient aye
His Father's will to work alway,
His death to undergo;
Which our Redemption sought.

(*The choir sings in unison, to a Plain-song tune:*)

"O Saviour of the World, Who by Thy cross and precious blood hath redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord!"

(*And the choir shall add a multiple—seven-fold?—Amen.*

Silent recessional, down the center aisle; with the Expositor leading, then two candle-bearers, then Abraham and Isaac, then the choir. After which the minister, from the gallery or from outside the door, pronounces the benediction.)

The Nativity Cycle
of
The York Mystery Plays

Translated and Adapted
(According to Ancient Precedent)

The (Towneley) Prologue

The Annunciation Play
(*The Spicers' Play*)

The Nativity Play
(*The Tile Thatchers' Play*)

The Shepherds' Play
(*The Chandlers' Play*)

The Meeting of the Three Kings
(*The Goldsmiths' Play*)

The Herod Play
(*The Masons' Play*)

The Adoration of the Three Kings
(*The Goldsmiths' Play*)

A SUGGESTED SETTING
FOR THE NATIVITY MYSTERIES

ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOMS OF THE OLDEN TIMES

IN the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Mystery Plays were regularly given in many English churches. In the larger churches of the day the Mysteries were produced in the chancel. Only later did they move out-of-doors and center on Corpus Christi Day. Wide variations of usage obtained, of course, in the semi-liturgical plays. The following suggestions are, however, illustrative of arrangements which were fairly standard.

The successive plays should not be given one after another in any single spot in the chancel, but at the appropriate "stations." The action shifts from one to another with naïve simplicity. A journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem may be represented by the few steps necessary from one labeled platform to another.

The place of honor should be reserved for the station labeled "Bethleem," where the Nativity Play and two Adorations take place. This may be directly before the center of the communion rail. If a thatched, slant-roof canopy on four poles, duly curtained, is not desired, two uprights, with a horizontal pole across them, supporting

divided curtains, will constitute this station. When the curtains are dropped, the scenes outside the stable take place; when they are open, the Holy Family appears. Angels may draw the curtains.

The Annunciation Play may be at the choir steps. A stepped platform, with a quaint chair upon it and a pot of lilies, is sufficient. An embroidery frame or a stand with a Book of Hours may add to the suggestion. The platform should be labeled "Nazrethe." If this station does not seem feasible, the Annunciation Play may take place before the curtains of the above-mentioned central station. And the naïve quaintness of action may be enhanced by a vested boy, a monk, or by an angel who comes in after the first play, removes the label and the properties, then hangs up the "Bethleem" label.

The Shepherds' Play should be given near the pulpit, since the old-time custom was to have the Angel of Good Tidings speak from the pulpit to the Shepherds. If a raised platform can be built before the choir rail, large enough to accommodate the three shepherds, with steps on two or more sides, it will be found convenient. On an upright (a dignified one; not a chance bit of timber) belongs the label "Feeldes nere Bethleem." Or else silvered stars of varied sizes may be fastened, each to a slender stained pole, which may be thrust into

A SETTING FOR THE YORK MYSTERIES

holes bored in the back board of the platform; the poles of sundry lengths.

Herod's station is more elaborate, opposite the shepherds' station and perhaps larger. It should have a canopy over a part of it, and a regal chair for Herod's throne under the canopy. A tripod with incense burning in it might be placed before the throne. The label could be either "Herodes Palas" or "Jerusaleme" or "Herodes Palas atte Jerusaleme."

The Three Kings should enter by different doors into the nave, meeting well toward the rear of the church. If the production is to aim at accuracy as well as quaintness, the star should be worked by suspending an archaic lantern on a wire running from the rear of the church, which should be pulled forward by an Angel ahead of the advancing Kings. The cord can be short, so that the Angel will walk up the aisle; or long so that the Angel may stand in the chancel and pull the lantern chancelward.

Tall candles in floor standards may be placed before the Nativity curtains and beneath the pulpit.

If there is a gallery in the church, it should be used for the angelic choir; even if it is in the rear of the nave.

All music should be *a capella* or accompanied by stringed instruments only. The music should not

be in anthem form; Plain-song is best, preferably only men's voices.

ANCIENT CONVENTIONS

There are many quaint conventions of these Mystery Plays as played in the twelfth-century churches. But every convention is a symbolism with a spiritual intent. To lose the spirit and see only the childlike method is to rob oneself.

May one list a few of the conventions introduced in the production of these York Plays?

The Prologue is the words God speaks of the need of Jesus' birth. The theology is, of course, thoroughly mediæval, but is, according to the instincts of the day, the best statement of God's faithful dealing with His people. The voice of God is not one voice, but three voices, yet one word. Three ministers, invisible before the altar, speak together, that the congregation may hear the utterance of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit thus as one. The Trinity-word comes from the altar, as it were. And the people fitly kneel.

The Angel is clad all in gold, with gold hair, wings, dress, and gloves. Originally the face, too, was gilded. Which is but a way of saying the glory of the brilliant light in which the angels dwell, and of insisting that angels are distinct from mortals. A gold veil will be better than a gilded mask.

COSTUME SUGGESTIONS

From the beginning the Shepherd Play was the real property of the peasants. This, above all others, is the folk-play. Country humor was quite permissible. Rustic homeliness of sentiment and characterization here got its opportunity. Somehow the unspoiled folk of an earlier day had not yet succumbed to the idea that enjoyment and a smile were out of place in the House of God! Humor, within bounds, seemed not amiss when dominated by reverence. The deaf old Shepherd, who cannot see the Angel when his confrères do, nor hear the song, until he has been disillusioned, that a companion has tried to sing—the deaf old Shepherd is one of the first literary examples of humor in the native tongue, akin to Chaucer's peasant folk, to Bottom the Weaver, to Sancho Panza, and their descendants. Here is the product of sheer human genius in its earliest creative work. We must acknowledge it as dedicated to the service of the Church!

The Herod Play is another example of native tradition. When Hamlet mentions "out-Heroding Herod," he reveals the grotesque absurdity of the enemy of God as those times saw him. The bumptious audacity and vainglorious boasting is the preachment against the vice of pride in all of us! We are not expected to laugh, but to see our own self-reliances as absurd! Here is the man without God! According to the custom of those days, Herod was thought a Saracen. It may have been

Moorish memories from Spain or the *bête noire* of the Crusading days which gave Herod his baggy yellow trousers and his curved scimitar; but folk-horror of vainglory gave Herod his blasphemous absurdity of soul!

The Magi follow the star? According to surviving rubrics we know this star to have been a lantern, pulled "upon a string before them." What if a trudging angel pulls the lantern? God guides His own, those who are searchers after Truth in life. This is but a symbol.

The rhythm of the ancient Norman-Latin-Saxon text is beautiful in the extreme. The following translation has endeavored to preserve the meters and the rhyme sequence. The alliteration, particularly in the Herod Play where it is built up with grim humor, has likewise been reproduced wherever possible. Anyone troubling to glance, for instance, at Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith's edition of the original will recognize the labor involved in even an inadequate translation and adaptation which attempts to perpetuate these beauties. But the beauties are so alluring they compel one's best endeavor.

The York Mysteries were chosen rather than the Coventry, Chester, Towneley, etc. because they seem to have been handed down for their three centuries relatively uncontaminated. They most nearly perpetuate what must have been the text and ideal when Mystery Plays were still acted

in the chancels of cathedrals and other minsters—*i.e.*, before the degeneration and theater-developments of humor and rant had their opportunity with pageant-wagon fair-days. We may suppose the York text and ideals were held to a churchly standard by churchly control over the Guild presentations. When one compares, *e.g.*, the York Shepherd Play with the play from another cycle where Mak the hireling steals a lamb and hides it in the cradle at home, where it bleats most inopportunely for him, whereat he is tossed in a blanket, then one realizes that liturgic drama was indeed different from pageant-wagon histrionics. We are grateful for the York spirit which gives us these childlike and unspoiled religious Mysteries.

I

PROLOGUE

In order properly to place these plays in Episcopal churches they should follow the Epistle in the Christmas Ante-Communion. In all other churches use such preliminary service as may seem apt.

Darkness.

A crash of thunder. The congregation kneels.

DEUS: (*Three voices, speaking slowly and impressively.*)

Ego sum Alpha et Omega,

Vita, Via,
Veritas primus et novissimus.

I am gracious and great, God without beginning,
The Maker unmade. All might is in Me.
I am Life and the way unto happiness winning,
I am the first and the last; as I bid shall it be.

THE CHOIR (*of Angels*) *sings the Sanctus:*

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts,
Heaven and Earth are full of Thy Glory!
Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High! Amen.

DEUS:

Since I have made all things of naught
And Adam with My hands have wrought;
Like to mine image, of mine own device;
And gave him joy in Paradise
To dwell therein; yet exiled from that place
I mind Me I did promise Grace.
For the old Adam sinful, an Adam new!
For the mother of all, mother of Him the Life true!
For that tree in the garden, Tree of Calvary;
Thus to fulfill all ancient prophecy.

Rise up Gabriel, and wend most sure
Unto a maiden gentle and pure,
To Nazareth in Galilee;

She dwelleth there in that city.
Yea, an angel must to Mary go
As the fiend went to Eve also.
Thou art angel fair and bright;
Fiend was loathly, foul to sight.
On My behalf gently her greet;
I have her chosen, that maiden sweet;
She shall bear of her virginity
Him who both God and Man shall be.
She shall be blessed without end.
Haste thee Gabriel; thy way now wend!

(*Then shall the choir sing a refrain from the Sanctus.*)

Mankind hath paid for his sin full sore
This five thousand years and more.
Out of pain shall man be bought;
I will not lose what I have wrought!
Adam shall out of prison pass
For that he beguiled was
Through the adder and his wife.
They bade him touch the Tree of Life
And eat the fruit that I forbade.
Ah! Man was judged for that deed!
Rightwiseness will man now make;
I will it that the Son shall manhood take.
Reason willeth there be three,—
A man, a maiden, and a tree:
Man for man and tree for tree,
Maiden for maiden; thus should it be!
For the old Adam, an Adam new;

For the mother of all living, mother of Him,
the Life;
For the tree in the garden, the Tree on Cal-
vary
Thus to fulfill all ancient prophecy.
(*The choir may now sing the Sanctus.*)

II

THE ANNUNCIATION

The old script reads:

"Incipit Annunciatio.
PERSONÆ:
ANGELUS.
MARIA.
SCENA:
Nazarethe."

(MARY *enters and mounts her station. She kneels a moment in prayer and rising says:* "In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." *The choir may sing* "*Amen.*" MARY *sits at her Book of Hours or embroidery frame.* GABRIEL *parts the curtains and steps forward.*)

GABRIEL:

Hail, Mary, full of grace and bliss!
Our Lord God is with thee,
And hath chosen thee for His;
Of all women blessed shalt thou be!

MARY:

What strange greeting, sir, is this,
Thus secretly come even unto me?
In my heart a thought there is
That God's messenger here I see!

ANGEL:

Now dread thee not, thou mild Marie,
For nothing that may thee befall;
For thou hast found most sovereignly
From God a Grace surpassing all.

MARY:

Say on!

ANGEL:

Conceive and bear a child shalt thou;
He shall be God; God's Son, I trow.
Of His dignity and Kingdom's span
Shall ken nor dream no earthly man.

MARY (*rising*):

Thou, God's own angel, tell me how
I shall bear a man-child now;
In chastity have I been aye.

ANGEL:

The Holy Ghost shall overshadow thee;
The holy birth of God's own Son shall therefrom be.

MARY:

Thou Angel, blessed messenger
Of God's will, I hold me well repaid.
I love my Lord with heart most dear.
For the grace thus on me laid

Behold God's servant here
To His will ready—His handmaid.
Be done to me, despite my fear,
His word, as thou hast said.

(*The* Angel Gabriel, *disappears.* Mary *passes within the curtains. The attendant removes the properties and the scene label; replacing it with the scene label, "Bethleem."*)

(*The Choir sings the Dresden Amen.*)

III

THE NATIVITY

"Scena:
Bethleem.
Personæ:
Maria.
Josephus."

(Joseph *and* Mary *enter up the aisle of the nave, clad in traveling clothes;* Joseph *with a staff in his hand.* Mary *leans on his arm, obviously weary. Yet* Mary's *face is quietly radiant.* Joseph *seems weary, not only in body but in soul.* Joseph *begins to speak before reaching the station, "Bethleem."*

The Choir sings a portion of the Te Deum, "When Thou Tookest upon Thee," etc.)

JOSEPH:

Almighty God in Trinity,
Lord of sweet mercies infinite,
I pray Thee, this Thy simple servant see.
(*He indicates* MARY, *with much tenderness in his gesture*)
Here in this lorn place, in pitiful plight,—
Ourselves alone!
Lord, grant us safe harborage this night
E'er we fall prone.
We have sought both up and down
Through divers streets of this city.
So many folk have come to town
That nowhere can we harbored be.
As at time of feasts
There is such press, no help I see
But to bed us with the beasts.
(*They move forward to the Station.*)
Yet if we here all night abide
The storm will beat into this shed;
Its walls are down on every side;
The roof will drip above our head!
How shall we do,—
Say, Mary, daughter! For I dread
This night we'll rue.

MARY:

God guideth us. He knoweth best.
Therefore, Joseph, have good cheer.
In this strange spot He will come manifest

That shall save mankind from sorrows drear,—
No more forlorn!
Sir, wit you well the time is near
Christ will be born.

JOSEPH:

Then surely we must bide here still;—
Here in this lowly place all night.
(JOSEPH *bows and kisses* MARY'S *hand.* MARY *enters the doorway of the station and stands, holding up the curtain, speaking to* JOSEPH *from the threshold.*)

MARY:

So, sir, forsooth. It is God's will.

JOSEPH:

Yet would I fain we had some light,
Whate'er befall!
It waxeth right murky to my sight.
'Tis cold withal!
I will depart to get us light
And to find fuel, too, to bring.

MARY:

God A'mighty guide thee aright!
(JOSEPH *turns and goes out to left or right.* MARY *speaks, raptly but calmly:*)
Now in my soul great gladness singeth,
I am clothed with comfort's cheer,
Now from mine own body springeth

The Son of God and man without a peer.
Blessed may He be!
(*She drops the curtain. Her voice comes from behind the curtain. A light shines within.*)
Jesus, my babe, that is so dear,—
Now born is He!
(*The curtain is lifted by an* Angel *within.* Mary *kneels at the manger; with the light from it illumining her face.*)
Hail! My Lord God! Hail! Thou Prince of Peace!
Hail! Our Father! (*She looks heavenward.*)
Hail! my little Son!
(*She looks again into the manger, intimately tender; then recollects herself in awe.*)
Hail! Sovereign Godhead, making sin to cease!
Hail! God-in-man by earth now won!
Hail! Through Whose might
All this world was first begun
Darkness and Light!
(*She rises, still adoring the Christ-child.*)
Son, though I am a simple serf of Thine
Vouchsafe, sweet Son, I pray Thee,
That I may take Thee in these arms of mine
And in this poor weed array Thee!
Grant me this bliss,

As thy mother chosen, Kingly baby!
Thy finger tips I kiss!

(*The curtain drops. The* ANGEL *stands, guardian fashion, before it. There is a moment of silence. The choir sings:*)

Adeste fideles, laeti triumphantes;
Venite, venite in Bethlehem!
Natum videte
Regem angelorum
Venite, adoremus; venite adoremus
Venite, adoremus Dominum.

(*The* ANGEL *stands one side from before the Station.* JOSEPH *enters, talking to himself as he comes.*)

JOSEPH:

Brr! The weather is full cold—
The fellest freeze that e'er befell.
God help them with mishap to be old
And all poor folk who are unwell—
'Tis so I say!
Now, good God, of my heart be sentinel
As Thou best may.

(*He turns toward the Station and sees the light through its curtain.*)

Ah, Lord God, what light is this
That cometh shining suddenly?
I do not know (May I have bliss!)
But when I come yonder home to Mary
Then shall I wisse.

(*He approaches. The* ANGEL *lifts the curtain.*)

JOSEPH:

Mary, daughter, how fareth it with thee?

MARY:

Right well, Joseph, as has been aye.

JOSEPH:

O Mary, what sweet thing is that low by thy knee?

MARY:

It is my Son, the sooth to say,
That is so good!

JOSEPH:

(*Making obeisance at the manger.*)
Now welcome, O Flower of fairest hue
In all earth's garden. I reverence Thy might!
(JOSEPH *kneels.*)
Hail! My maker! Hail, Christ Jesu!
Hail! Royal King, root of all right!
Hail, Saviour!
Hail, Lord, Who sendest out Thy light
Hail, blessed Flower!
(JOSEPH *arises and continues, pointing to left and right within.*)
O Mary, behold! These beasties mild
Make loving rev'rence in their manner
Unto the Child
As they were men!

It seemeth plain from their demeanor
Their Lord they ken.

MARY:

Their Lord they ken; that wot I well,
They worship Him with might and main.
Yea, more; the midnight cold is fell,
To hold Him warm they are full fain;
With their warm breath
They breathe on Him to aid us twain
To warm Him with.
Now sleepeth my Son; blest may He be!
He lieth warm the beasts between.

JOSEPH:

Honor and worship always be to Thee.
Everlasting Lord, whom prophets have foreseen,
Joyfully, wistfully.
Now, Lord, to Thy service I obligate me.
With all my heart wholly.
(*He kneels at the foot of the manger.*)

MARY:

Merciful Saviour, Redeemer most High!
To Thy love I make my life an oblation—
Verily Thy handmaid am I!
Grant me, Thy mother, Thy benison!
My Lord! My God! And my Son!
(*She kneels. The* ANGEL *stands behind the manger; his hands crossed on his breast and his head bowed. In the light from the*

manger a tiny hand is raised in blessing.[1] *The curtain of the Station falls and the choir softly sings, "The First Nowell."*)

IV

THE SHEPHERDS' PLAY

"Personæ:

i Pastor
ii Pastor
iii Pastor
Angelus
Angeli

Scena: 'The Feeldes nere Bethleem.'"

First Shepherd:

Brother, take heed to what I say:
My heart is strangely moved.
Our forefathers, both Hosee and Isaie
Of a Prince without a peer have proved
That he should descend down to a lady mild,
To heal them who are woeful and lorn;
To make this mankind free, of sin defiled,
And in our Bethlehem hereby
Shall that same bairn be born.

[1] This may be omitted, of course. The mechanism is simple. A small hand made of wax or plasticine is affixed to a short rod and draped like an arm. The rod is pivoted on the inside of the manger. A string from the end opposite the hand runs through a hole in the bottom of the manger to Joseph, who pulls it to lift the hand at the proper moment.

SECOND SHEPHERD:

Prophet Balaam, brother, have I heard say,
A star should shine and signify
With lightful gleams, mayhap on any day,
That He be born in this burgh nigh.
And as the text it telleth clearly,
With His blissful blood He shall us buy.

THIRD SHEPHERD (*old and bent*):

Ah, merciful Maker; great is Thy might;
Who thus will to Thy servants see;
Might we once look upon that light,
Gladder brethren might no men be!
Wherefore, brethren, I counsel ye,
Flit fast o'er these darkling fells
To find our cattle, where they may be;
And that we stay not to gossip else!

(*The angels appear in the "sky." The* MESSENGER ANGEL *should be in the pulpit; the angelic choir either nearby or in the gallery. The* FIRST *and* SECOND SHEPHERDS *see them. The* THIRD SHEPHERD *goes plodding on.*)

FIRST SHEPHERD:

Whee! Hold!

SECOND SHEPHERD:

Woo! Holla!

THIRD SHEPHERD (*continuing his previous speech*):

Therefore, hearken unto me.

First Shepherd:

Whee! Man! Thou goest mad!

Second Shepherd:

Halt! In God's name!

Third Shepherd (*pausing, irritably*):

What ail is come to ye?

First Shepherd (*to the* Third):

Stop here by me and tell me right
If thou hast seen such wondrous sight?

Second Shepherd:

I ne'er did. Nor any man.

First Shepherd (*to the* Third):

Wilt thou not stop! Behold into the East
A strange sight shalt thou then see
Upon the sky!

Third Shepherd (*puzzled*):

Tell me, mates, betwixt us three
Why stare ye thus so sturdily?
(*He shades his eyes and peers about.*)

Second Shepherd:

As long as we have herdsmen been
And kept our sheep in this ravine
So strange a sight was never seen.

First Shepherd:

In troth, now comes it new enow:
It must some marvel mean.

Second Shepherd:

What it meaneth wat not ye, I trow
For all that ye can gape and gog and crane!

THE ANGEL (*sings*):

Gloria in Excelsis Deo!

THIRD SHEPHERD:

I can sing as well as ye!
(For ye did try to sing?)
Thus it was!
(*He starts to sing in tremulous tones, but breaks off. His companions are dumb.*)
Ha! Ha! This is a merry note!
I am too cracked in my throat!

SECOND SHEPHERD:

I trow you bluster, with a too bold voice.
Fain would I know what it might be
That to us made this noble noise!

THE ANGEL (*chants his message*):

Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord!
(*The* THIRD SHEPHERD *sees the angel and kneels in fear. But he cannot hear, and makes signs to the others to this effect.*)

FIRST SHEPHERD:

An angel brought us tidings new—
A Babe in Bethlehem is born;
Of whom, then, spake our prophets true,
And bade us meet Him there this morn!

THIRD SHEPHERD:

But how shall we find Him? Would I knew!
I would give Him both my hat and horn.

SECOND SHEPHERD:

Him for to find have we no dread,
By yon star shall we be led.

FIRST SHEPHERD:

Yea, Thou sayest sooth.
Go we forthwith
Him for to honor.
And making mirth and melody
With song we seek our Saviour.

THE ANGELS (*sing the Gloria in Excelsis, or a part thereof.*)

(THE SHEPHERDS *approach "Bethlehem."*)

FIRST SHEPHERD:

Brethren, be all blithe and glad;
Here is the burgh where we should be.

SECOND SHEPHERD:

Such hap of salvation never herdmen had.
Lo, here is the house and here is He!

THIRD SHEPHERD:

Yea, forsooth, this is the same.
Lo, where that Lord is laid
Betwixt two beasties tame,
Right as the angel said.

FIRST SHEPHERD:

The Angel said that He should save
This world and all who dwell therein;
Therefore, if I shall aught after crave
To worship Him I'd best begin!
(*They approach the manger. He kneels.*)
Lord, I am but a simple knave,

THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS

For all I come of courteous kin.
Lo! here such harness as I have:
A mere brooch and a bell of tin
At your bosom to be!
And when thou shalt rule all,
Good Son, forget not me
If any vantage fall!

SECOND SHEPHERD (*kneeling*):

Thou Son that shall save both sea and sand,
See to me, for that I thee have sought,
I am over poor to make present
As my heart would and as I ought.
Two hazel nuts on a ribband—
Lo, Little Babe, what I have brought!
And when Thou shalt be Lord in land
Do good again! Forget me not!
For I have ofttimes heard declared
Of cunning clerkes and clean
That bounty brings its due reward.
Now wot ye what I mean!

THIRD SHEPHERD:

Now, look on me, my Lord, most dear:
Even though I do not forward press.
Thou art a Prince without a peer.
I have no present for Thee that must please;
But, lo! An horn spoon have I here
And it will harbor forty pease:
This will I give you with good cheer
Such novelty may not displease.

Farewell, Thou sweet swain,
God grant us living long!

V

THE MEETING OF THE THREE KINGS

"Personæ:
i Rex
ii Rex
iii Rex

The Roade to Jerusaleme."
(*The choir sings a stanza of "We Three Kings of Orient Are." The Three Kings enter at separate doors.*)

First King:

Lord, God, even from Thee Life Infinite
Doth come. I'll love Thee, to Thee belong,
Since Thou hast let me see this sight
While all my kindred vainly long.
'Twas said a star with rays all bright
Out of the East should shine full strong;
And that it should signify the might
Of One who will be Lord o'er wrong,
Who men from sin will save.
And certes I now pray,

God grant me what I crave—
To guide me in the rightful way.

SECOND KING (*As he walks slowly down the side aisle toward the rear*):

Almighty God, who all hath wrought
I worship Thee, as is right worthy,
Since Thou hast by Thy brightness brought
Me from my realm rich Araby.
Nor shall I stop till I have sought
What marvel sure of prophecy
It signifieth! God grant my thought
That I should find good company,
And my comfort thus increase.
With Thy star shining bright
Certes I shall not cease
Till I wit what it doth plight.

THIRD KING (*entering by the other side aisle, toward the rear*):

Lord God! Who maketh good abound
And who wilt by it end all evil,
Who made the sun and moon so round,
Who put yon star to stay stone-still
Till I its cause have clearly found,
Acquaint me with Thy gracious will!
What ho! I hope I have some fellows found
My yearning for road-mates to fulfil.
(*He advances and speaks to the other Kings.*)
Sirs, Jehovah keep you free
And guard you from all woe!

First King:

Amen! So may it be!
And save thee, Sir, also!

(*The three Kings are now together, at the back of the center aisle.*)

Third King:

Sirs; if ye are willing, I would pray
That ye would tell me your intent;
Wherefore ye wend forth in this way
And from what land your steps are bent?

Second King:

Full gladly, sir, without delay.
A sudden sight to us was sent,
A royal star that rose ere day
Before us in the firmament;
Which made us fare from home
And try its mystery to prove.

Third King:

Certes, sirs, on me, too, it shone;
Wherefore I in the desert move.

First King:

Of your fellowship are we fain.
Let us go forward all together.

(*They journey together up the main aisle, following the star; which, under the leadership of the Angel who pulls it, at last pauses at the choir steps, near* Herod's *Station, marked "Jerusaleme."*)

Sirs, here is Jerusalem
Where we may ask a road thither

Beyond to Bethlehem
Where we shall seek yet further.

THIRD KING:

Sirs, softly! Ye should understand
That to be wise now there is great need;
Sir Herod is King of this whole land.
He has strange laws which we must heed.

FIRST KING:

Since we approach thus near at hand,
By his sought help we may succeed.
Our errand once within his own command
Without hearts' dread we may proceed.

SECOND KING:

To gain leave of this fearsome Lord
'Tis reason, aye and clever skill.

THIRD KING:

Thereto do we all accord.
Let's wend and wit his will.

VI

THE HEROD PLAY

"PERSONÆ:

Herodes
Filius
Primus Rex

Secundus Rex
Tertius Rex
Primus et secundus Milites
Primus et secundus consules."

SCENE: Herod's Court, with his son and courtiers.

(*Herod and his court enter.*
The choir sings verses 1-8, 17-20 from the Tenth Psalm.)

HEROD (*Loudly and arrogantly boasting. Let* HEROD *accentuate the initial letters of words where identical*):

See the clouds couched in clearness, which the heavens hold high;
Jupiter, and Jove, Mars and Mercury amid!
Wandering o'er my kingdom in rows, as they fly
Before the swift winds—they blow where I bid!
Saturn's my subject, his course do I guide!
I speak at my liking, and he sinketh below!
Unseen through the rack of the red sky do I ride!
Thunders by thousands in thrall do I throw.
The moon at my word meekly mustereth his light.
Cæsars in castles show me kindness great.
Lords and ladies, too lovely, list to me with delight;
For I am fairer of face, of mien more sedate!

(The sooth if I say it) seven and sixty times more,
Than glorious sea gulls are gayer than gold, that am I!
Believe ye these tales that I tell o'er and o'er?
I am worthy, witty and wise, King most high!

FIRST SOLDIER:

All Kings to thy crown must low, prostrate bend,
Thy law and thy lordship is their lodestar bright;
Is there traitor untrue who will not thee attend?
Thou shalt lay him in dungeon with no ray of light!

SECOND SOLDIER:

If any deceiver, i' faith, should dare to offend
We would beset him full sore, that sot, in your sight.

HEROD:

In wealth I shall cause ye to dwell ere I go.
For ye are worthy wights, in counsel full knowing.
Any brat who is bawling, disturbing your quiet,
Ding ye him down!

SECOND SOLDIER:

We shall crackle his crown!

HEROD:

My fine son so seemly, how seem their saws?

How courteous these knights who protect my cause!

HEROD'S SON:

Father, I, too, would fell in fair fight
Any strong man who denieth your right!
With blows to death should he be dight
Who listeth not to thee, to his despite!

(*Enter the* CHAMBERLAIN)

THE CHAMBERLAIN (*bowing low*):

My Lord, Sir Herod, King with crown—

HEROD (*roaring*):

Peace, dastard! By Satan's anger!

THE CHAMBERLAIN:

Sire! Something of note hath happed in town!

HEROD:

What, false rascal, wouldst court danger?
Soldier, beat yon boy and ding him down.

SECOND SOLDIER:

My Lord, messengers for their word are not to blame.
This may be, sire, for thine own renown!

HEROD:

What should I hear? Tell on quickly!

THE CHAMBERLAIN:

My Lord, I met at morn
Three Kings carping together
Of One who is now born.
And they hied them to come hither.

HEROD:

Three Kings, forsooth?

THE HEROD PLAY

THE CHAMBERLAIN:

Sir, so I say!
For I saw them myself all several.

FIRST COUNCILOR:

My Lord, examine him, we would pray.

HEROD:

Sirrah, tell me nothing notional.

THE CHAMBERLAIN:

Sire, they will be here this very day.

HEROD:

Have done! (*The* CHAMBERLAIN *departs.*)
Dress us in rich array
And each man profess him merry cheer
That no semblance should betray
Only friendship fair and clear;
Until we wit what they do will
Whether it be good or ill.

(*Enter the three Kings who, since the ending of their Meeting-Play, have been sitting below the choir steps or standing to one side.*)

FIRST KING:

Our God, who granteth us this lasting light
Which hath led us from out our land,
Keep thee, Sir King and comely Knight,
And all thy folk at thy right hand.

HEROD:

Mohammed, *my* God, the most in might,
Who hath my health all in his keeping,

Save you, sirs, so seemly to our sight.
Tell your new tidings as your greeting.

SECOND KING:

Tiding shall we tell you, sir, of hope;
A star went us beforn
Which maketh us search and grope
Toward One who is now born.

HEROD:

Now born? That birth I hold bad!
Certes, unwitty lunacy ye had
To trail so far to seek a lad.
All wise men sure will ween ye mad!

THIRD KING:

Certes, rather, such heartening we wisse,
We shall not cease ere we come where he is.

HEROD:

This were a wonder thing!
What bairn should this be?

FIRST KING:

Hearken—He shall be King
Of Jews and of Judee.

HEROD:

King! King of Judee! Ye Dogs! Fie!
Now I see well ye rant and rave.
By any shimmering of the sky
Ye could ken nor King nor knave.
Nay, I am King and none but I
That ye shall ken if that ye crave!
I am sole Judge of Jews and all Judee
To let live or to destroy pertaineth unto me!

SECOND COUNCILOR (*plucking* HEROD *by the sleeve*):

My Lord, to understand this foul defame
Ask them more quietly of the same.

HEROD (*aside to his councilor*):

I thank thee for this word
I will do as I have heard.
(*To the Kings*)
Now, Kings, cast care away.
Lay not ill against our speech.
To come and go I grant you safety—nay
If your search its object reach
Mayhap myself will go likewise
That I may see with mine own eyes.

FIRST KING:

Sir King, we all accord.
'Tis said a bairn is born
That shall be king and lord
To succour those who are lorn.

FIRST COUNCILOR (*aside to* HEROD):

My Lord, be ye not downcast,
Bid them go forth and friendly prove
The sooth of this which striketh thee aghast,
Then come and tell it you. With tricks smooth
Will we await them here
To wreck all hopes they hold so dear.

HEROD (*aside to* COUNCILOR):

Now certes that was well said.
(*To the Kings*)

Sir Kings, wend forth your journey to fulfill
To Bethlehem: it lieth near at hand.
Inquire forthright, both good and ill,
Of Him who should be Lord in the land,
And come again to me, all new athrill,
And tell me truly of your tidings grand.
To worship Him, that is my lowly will—
This, prithee, all honestly do understand!

SECOND KING:

We shall haste to bring thee word;
Sooth of that Child, both seen and heard!

(*The three Kings pass from before* HEROD *and stand looking up for the star.*)

SECOND COUNCILOR:

Fare well, ye be beguiled!

HEROD:

Aha! This is a subtil trap.
Now will they come to me again
And tell me of that little child;
And sudden like a thunderclap
They and the child be slain!

VII

THE ADORATION OF THE THREE KINGS

The "Star" is above the Bethlehem Station. The Kings stand before it.

"PERSONÆ:
i Rex
ii Rex
iii Rex
Ancilla
Maria
Josephus"

(*If one prefers, an angel may take the maid's lines. The choir sings a stanza or more of the carol, "We Three Kings."*)

FIRST KING:

Ah, sirs, for a glimpse of—what shall I say?
Where is our sign? I see it not.

SECOND KING:

No more do I! A-lack-a-day!
In our wending some wrong is wrought.

THIRD KING:

Unto that God I counsel we should pray
Who sent his sign unto us, unsought;
That he make plain to us straightway
How to Christ we may be brought.

First King:

Look, sirs! I see it stand
Above where He is born!
Lo, here is the house, at hand!
We have not gone amiss this morn.
(*The maid pulls the curtain.*)

The Maid:

Whom seek ye, traveling to and fro?
Here dwelleth a mother with her child.

Second King:

God's certain sign hath told us so:
We seek a baby and a maiden mild.

The Maid:

Come near, good sirs, and see
Your road to its end is brought.

Third King:

Hold here, brethren; bow the knee!
Lo, the One whom we have sought!

Second King:

Let us make now no delay
But forthwith take forth our treasury
And offer gifts of good array
To worship Him, as is most worthy.

Third King:

He is worthy to receive
All worship; wealth to win.
Since thou art eldest, I believe,
Brother, thou shouldst begin.

FIRST KING:

Hail! Fairest One the world ever will find.
From the fiend and his fears Thou'lt defend us.
Hail! Thou who art come to unbind
All the fell bonds of sin which offend us!
Hail! Thou King of all humankind,
Sent from God's Heaven to befriend us.
It is but worthy that gold, pure refined,
Should be offered to Him God doth lend us,
Enriching all life by His richness enshrined
In our flesh. Be pleased by my present portentous!

SECOND KING:

Hail! Bread from Heaven on which we shall feed!
Hail! Flower fairest, which never shall fade!
Hail! Son who art sent of David's own seed:
Who shalt save us from sins which degrade!
Hail, mild bairn of God, long fore-decreed;
Of a maid, matchless, Thy mother Thou made;
Through her the grace of Thy Godhead is freed
As the gleam of the sunlight through glass to pervade
The dark room of earth, making darkness recede!
As man's judge enthroned beyond death's dour shade

Thou wilt sit. Incense clouds are Thy meed!
Son! Then look to Thy subjects and aid!

THIRD KING:

Hail! Child foreordained our sorrows to bear;
For our sake to be bounden and beat;
Thy Father's children from wrong's grasp to tear.
Faithful friend, hail! We fall at Thy feet!
To the Cross for Thy work Thou art heir.
Wherefore I bring for Thy close winding-sheet
Myrrh for Thy graving. Take the gift fair
And, though 'tis not great, save us, I entreat.

MARY:

Sir Kings, ye travel not in vain,
As ye have sought, here may ye find.
God's Angel in his greeting plain.
Promised my son should joy mankind
Therefore, doubt ye no bit
Ye shall have your ask'd boon.
I shall witness submit
Of all said and done.

FIRST KING:

For solace, sirs, may we now sing?
All is performed which we prayed.
Bairn of God, give Thy blessing
To the fair fortune here laid.

(*All kneel. The congregation kneels. Above the edge of the cradle is seen a*

baby's hand raised for a moment in blessing. It then disappears. The Kings withdraw from the Manger.)

MARY (*kneeling, prays to the Child*):

My God, my Lord, My Son so dear,
To Thy Godhead heartily I pray
With all mine heart entire.
Since Thou hast chosen as Thy mother here
Myself, an hallowed maid today—
Of Thy grace do I aspire;
Beseeching Thee for all mankind
Which hath in mind to worship Thee!
Their soul Thou'lt save!
This boon I crave,
My Son, of Thee!
Amen.

The Gloria shall then be sung. And the Nicene Creed and Benediction shall end the service.

The Summoning of Everyman

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY
MORALITY PLAY

ADAPTED FOR MODERN USE
IN CHURCH, BUT ACCORDING
TO ANCIENT CONVENTIONS
AND TRADITIONS

✣

THE SUMMONING OF

EVERYMAN

THERE was no greater Morality than "EVERYMAN."

It seems to have been recognized from the beginning that this Morality was the ideal of the type. It is simple, but that is a part of its nobility. It is austere and graphic, but the temperateness of its craftsmanship condenses very great implications. It is true in the self-same fashion that the Parable of the Prodigal Son is true. Jesus' Parables were suggested Morality Plays.

"The Summoning of Everyman" was published in English as early as the year 1500, by the "Printer in Ordinary" to Henry VIII. But it had been known for several decades. Its origin is now attributed to a Dutch Morality by Peter of Diest, which was popular in Dutch, German, and Latin since about 1430. It was a favorite subject of representation, not only in the churches, but by traveling companies at feasts and holy days or by noblemen's troupes of players, schooled by baronial chaplains, in the halls of the great châteaux and castles. Queen Elizabeth's Prayer Book had woodcuts suggesting it; Holbein's "Dance of

Death" is upon the same theme. All west European thought in these centuries was familiar with the concept crystallized in this play. However modest, it was indeed axiomatic.

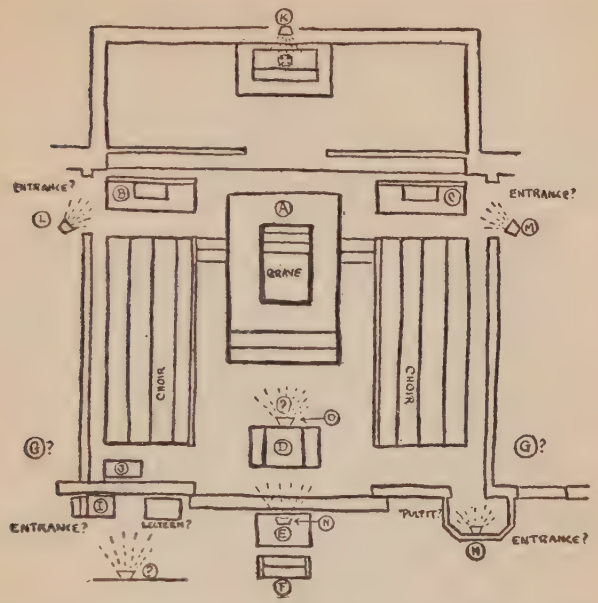
One would indeed be somewhat uninformed in the literature of religious thought if he did not recognize such a Morality as "Everyman" as essential to his fund of wholesome, cultural fact.

I

THE SETTING

IN A CHURCH WITH CHANCEL ARRANGEMENT

1. A platform (A) is built between the choir stalls, in which platform is the grave. Steps down into the grave from the rear. On the front of the platform steps across its full width.
2. Either side of the platform's rear edge a small platform (B) and (C) with a long seat and a tall screen for backing. It is suggested that a curtain, with graceful folds, hang from the top of each screen and out over the seat. The curtains should match. Of rich coloring, preferably dark blue-green. Velvet if possible.



If it is desired to stage the play more elaborately, these "Stations" might be constructed like a tall shrine, with a tracery arch overhead, the front elevation being thus like the tracery of a Gothic window. A light inside and overhead, attached to a switch in the wings.

3. Below the choir steps a draped table (E) with a large candlestick in the center. Against this is set the litany desk (F).
4. At the front of the chancel is a small stepped

platform (D), to be used either as a seat or as a pedestal.

5. If there is a side chapel in the church, it should be utilized for Everyman's Last Sacrament. Otherwise either an anteroom off the chancel or a temporary small altar at one side of the main chancel (G).
6. The Doctor stands in the pulpit (H) at the beginning and end of the play.
7. A small pedestal (I) outside the choir rail (beyond the lectern?).
8. A kneeler (J) is placed against the choir rail, adjacent to the pedestal (I).
9. Lights.
    a. If the altar has a reredos with a figure of Christ, arrange a hooded light (K) to illuminate it, focused directly at it alone. This light to be on a switch to be operated from outside the chancel.
    If there is no Christ-figure, illuminate the altar cross. Or if there is a Christ-figure in an altar window and the play is given after darkness falls, a light outside the window, to shine through the Christ-figure, will be most effective.

b. A spot-light, right and left rear (L) and (M), to illuminate the persons appearing in the Stations (B) and (C).

c. A floodlight (N), concealed either in the table (E) or at one side against the front pews, to illuminate characters standing on pedestal (D) or pedestal (I) or along the front of the choir.

d. The pulpit will probably have its own light.

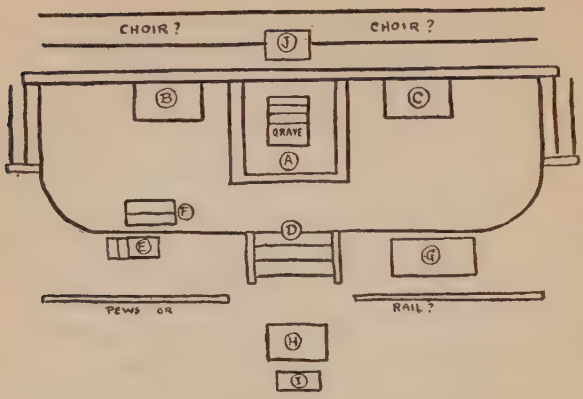
e. If the floodlight (N) is not sufficient to illuminate persons standing on the grave platform (A), a flood or spot-light (O) had best be placed against the pedestal (D).

The side chapel or altar must likewise be lighted. The lighting can be much simplified in a small church, or omitted altogether, in which latter case no attempt will be made to utilize anything but the usual church lighting.

f. If desired, the choir can carry long candles, lighted. Or the front row of choristers may carry them.

IN A CHURCH WITH A PULPIT PLATFORM

1. The platform with the grave should be built at the center rear (A), with the end, not the



side, of the grave toward the congregation, one or two steps up from the pulpit platform. Allow as much space as feasible along the front of the grave platform. Steps at the sides also.

2. The choir in its usual seats, across the rear of the platform and higher up?
3. At either side of the grave-platform the "Stations" (B) and (C) draped with rich, plain-colored material.
4. Steps (D) should, if possible, be arranged to give passage from the center aisle to the pulpit platform.
5. A pedestal (E) below the pulpit platform, against its edge.
6. A kneeling-desk (F), facing front, standing

on the pulpit platform at its edge, just above the pedestal (E).

7. The altar or holy table (G) below the pulpit-platform, moved to the right of the center, if central steps (D) have been found feasible.
8. The table (H) with the candlestick at the head of the center aisle. Against it a kneeling-bench or a cushion (I).
9. Let the Doctor stand in the choir (J) directly above the grave.
10. Lighting:

    To illuminate the focal points of the action. Or usual church lighting. The choir with candles?

Characters

The Doctor (or Messenger)

Everyman

God (Adonai)

Death

Fellowship

Cousin and
Kindred

Goods

Good Deeds and
Knowledge (Conscience)

Strength
Discretion
Five Wits and
Beauty

Confession

Angel

Several persons can play two parts each; one in the beginning, one later. Fellowship, Cousin, Kindred and Goods are rôles which finish early in the play, leaving the actors free to "double."

COSTUMES

The Doctor or Messenger. A cowled monk.
God (Adonai):

Ancient Moralities were not averse to allowing this character to be played by a man in golden robes, with a gold mask and gold hair and beard. This does not seem wise today, unless a merely accurate revival is contemplated, regardless of spiritual effect. It seems distinctly more fitting that the figure of Christ or the cross should be illuminated when "God" speaks. If there is an altar, a figure enveloped in shimmery silver gauze, with head and body completely covered, will give the effect of a shadowy presence in the

"EVERYMAN" COSTUMES

semi-darkness. Otherwise only a voice from a hidden source. The most beautiful male reading voice possible.

DEATH:

Ancient custom clothed Death in a close-fitting black suit, painted with the bones of a skeleton. Death sometimes carried a drum. In order to obtain maximum spiritual impression, however, we should not run to gruesome extremes. Why not clothe Death in a billowy, all-enveloping black drapery? Let him carry a scythe and hour-glass, perhaps. The face can be whitened, but not absurdly.

EVERYMAN:

Blue-green, shimmery silk surcoat, to the knees, with fur around neck and hem. Black stockings; pointed cloth shoes. A rich, bright-colored girdle. This surcoat must be made so that it can be pulled down off the shoulders and hang from the belt. If desired, this surcoat may be dropped while Everyman is in the side chapel or anteroom. The white garment (marked "Penitence" across its front) is full length and covers him.

FELLOWSHIP:

Clad in gorgeous, parti-colored, foppish clothes. All scalloped and ribboned. Cf. Boutet de Monvel's pictures of Joan of Arc's courtier contemporaries.

COUSIN AND KINDRED:

Cousin is a man; Kindred a woman. Smug, fusty, upholstered folk!

Cousin wears knee-length surcoat of mongrel colors, pointed cloth shoes, and a hat with a folded drapery falling over one ear.

Kindred wears a "hennin" on her head,—*i.e.*, a tall conical hat (made of buckram or wall-paper)—with a light veil floating to the ground from its peak. A cloak over a "much-befussed" dress.

GOODS:

In scarlet from head to foot. Knee-length surcoat with scalloped edges to sleeves and hem. A painted shield over the heart, with gold pieces. A sumptuous red hat, with a velvet drapery off one side. Carries a big purse and huge keys on a big ring.

GOOD DEEDS:

In bright yellow. Make the costume, if possible, of yellow silk gauze. A tall crown (crown can be made of thin sheet zinc, cut with hardware shears and gilded or silvered).

KNOWLEDGE (CONSCIENCE):

A nun's costume. Preferably white with a black veil.

STRENGTH:

Strength is in armor. A helmet can be made on a silvered "derby" for a base, with a sheet

zinc visor and chin-piece, and plumes fastened to it. A head-covering of gray silvered cloth comes to the shoulders. On a man's coat attach cylinders of zinc, tin, or silver oilcloth above and below the elbow; hammer a small tin dish into geometrical design and attach at the elbows. A figured, scalloped piece of rich cloth (a tabard) with a square hole cut for the head, falls from his shoulders to his knees, back and front. Fill in at the sides with silver oilcloth. Make silver oilcloth greaves for the lower leg and pointed silver oilcloth shoes. Strength should carry a great, two-handed sword, which can be made from sheet zinc attached to a massive handle and hilt.

DISCRETION:

Flower crowned. A symbolic costume, not of mundane fashion. Perhaps of gold oilcloth, scalloped down the sides, girdled with flowers. Over a flowing white gown. A heraldic shield over the heart.

FIVE-WITS:

The same.

BEAUTY:

A fifteenth-century, simpering, pretty butterfly. She may wear a hennin, perhaps of the curved variety indicated in the diagram, edged with ermine (cotton, spotted here and

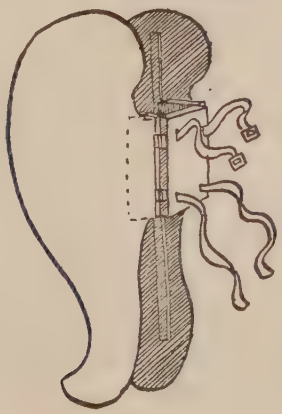
there with ink). Her gown should be gay and mannered. The style shown in the diagram is only suggestive.

CONFESSION:

A cowled monk. In white habit with black or brown cowl tabard.

ANGEL:

In silver gauze, simply draped. A halo behind the head, attached to a silvered elastic headband. Hair gathered loosely behind. The angel should wear great wings. These can be made of corrugated pasteboard, stiffened with light battens their full length, and fastened to oblongs of light wood which are hinged to an oblong of wood which straps (under the gown) between the shoulders.



THE CHOIR (men only):
Clothed in black, preferably with cowls.

SUGGESTED SERVICE

The Morality Play should be preceded by a brief service, to create the proper mood.

1. Choir processional—in silence.
2. A hymn.
3. A portion of a litany.
4. An interpretive word to the congregation, explaining their part.
5. The offertory (the alms basons not brought forward at the end); the hymn "Christian, dost thou see them?" is ancient and appropriate.
6. Silence. (Darkness?) During which the Doctor enters the pulpit and God and Death take their places.
7. An (invisible) minister says "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."
   The Morality begins.

PROGRAM NOTE

It will be of great value if the congregation may have a program in hand which indicates the gist of the allegory and plainly tells what the congre-

gation shall do, and when. Here is the text for a suggested service outline:

The following Interpretive Notes may well be read before one attends the service of which "Everyman" is the sermon.

1. The Theme is of the human confusion between essentials and unessentials. The average human (Everyman) comes too easily to think that Fellowship, Goods, and Relationship are a part of his own essential life. When confronted by the necessity of standing before God, he finds that they are not a part of him. Only his Good Deeds, painfully feeble and insufficient, is indissolubly his; to go as a part of him to face God's gaze.

Symbolized by God's command to the grim Angel of Death, whom we might prefer to call the Angel of Realities, Everyman finds suave Fellowship, unctuous Kindred and Cousin, and sleek, taunting Goods all desert him. They will not go to face God.

Feeble Good Deeds will go, but how weakly Good Deeds can aid!

But Conscience, called (spiritual) Knowledge, sends Everyman to seek the help and comfort of the Christian faith.

Then begins the more subtle but more searching question which human qualities are eternal and which temporal. What traits of our own inner lives are only adaptations to earthly existence and

which are our preparation for Life in God? This portion of the play is necessarily to be understood in advance lest we lose the clue of its climactic problem.

To Confession goes Everyman, in his sorrow for failure. Not merely by the Church as the hearer of penitence, but by Everyman's own sorrow is the scourge of Penitence (remorse) delivered to its function of purging chastisement. But remorse avails. Sorrow delivers one from the grip of wrong. Clad in the white garment of contrition there is the assurance of forgiveness and a new self growing out of and transcending the old.

This new self of spiritual desire is a self which is a more central self than the old. Discretion (canny calculation), Beauty, Five-Wits (the bodily senses which cannot discern spiritual realities), and Strength (dominant ideals) are all revealed as germaine only to the things of this world. They must depart when Reality summons the Self.

Thus, in the quaint symbolism of the Morality, Confession gives Everyman the scourge which, in his own hands, he wields to the new strength of Good Deeds. Clad in the garment of Contrition, he goes to the Church for assurance of forgiveness; he sees Discretion, Beauty, Five-Wits, and Strength flee away at the sight of the grave. But Knowledge goes with him to its brink, pointing forward to the things which do not pass away. And Good Deeds goes with him to face his Judge

and Redeemer. The Angel of Resurrection speaks to the congregation words of that Reality which abides.

2. The characters, in the order of their first speaking, are these:

THE DOCTOR—A monastic.

ADONAI—God in Christ—symbolized by the shadowy figure at the altar and the light on the Christ-figure above.

DEATH—The Angel of Reality.

EVERYMAN—Entering blithely, a song on his lips, preceded by his (invisible) angel—carrying

The candle of his earthly days.
The blotted Book of his Reckoning.

FELLOWSHIP.
KINDRED and
COUSIN.
GOODS.
GOOD DEEDS.
KNOWLEDGE (Whom we would call Conscience).
CONFESSION.
BEAUTY.
STRENGTH (ideals of might).
DISCRETION (prudent canniness).
FIVE-WITS (the bodily senses).
THE ANGEL (of the Resurrection).

According to ancient precedent and in order to make it plain that the message of the play is the only motive of its enactors, no participant's name is given.

3. At the close of "Everyman" the congregation is asked to coöperate for the sake of spiritual effectiveness, as follows:

a. When the Doctor enters the pulpit for the epilogue of the Morality the congregation is asked to kneel.

b. At the close of his brief admonition:—
("Unto which place God bring us all thither
That we may live in soul together:
Thereto help the Trinity—
Amen, say ye, for Saint Charity")—
he will descend from the pulpit and the choir sings the sevenfold Amen.

c. Then the Congregation will rise and in silence leave the church, no one speaking to anyone else until well outside.

The choir and participants of the Morality Play will meanwhile hold their places until the church is empty except for them. When they will be dismissed by a further benediction and retire.

THE PLAY

("Here beginneth a Treatise how the High Father of Heaven sendeth Death to summon Every Creature to come and give Account of their Lives in this World and is in Manner of a Moral Play.")

I

THE DOCTOR (*speaking from the pulpit. No lights except in the pulpit*):

I pray you all give your audience
And hear this matter with reverence,——
By figure a Moral Play—
The Summoning of Everyman called it is,
That our lives an ending shows
How transitory is our day.
This matter is wondrous precious.
Its intent is yet more gracious,
And sweet to bear away.
The story saith,—Man, in the beginning
Look well, and take good heed to the ending,
Be you never so gay!
Ye think sin at its beginning full sweet

Which in the end causeth thy soul to weep,
When the body lieth in clay.
Here shall ye see how FELLOWSHIP and JOLLITY
Both STRENGTH, PLEASURE and BEAUTY
Will fade from thee as flower in May.
For ye shall hear how our Heaven King
Calleth EVERYMAN to a general reckoning.
Give audience and hear what he doth say.

(*The* DOCTOR *comes down from the pulpit. The light in the pulpit goes out.* THE CHOIR *sings, very solemnly, the following stanzas of the ancient, traditional hymn. During the hymn* GOD *and* DEATH *take their places;* DEATH *in the grave,* GOD *at the altar, kneeling.*)

THE CHOIR:

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand:
Ponder nothing earthly-minded, for with blessing in his hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand.

At his feet the six-winged seraph: cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the Presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, Lord most high.
Amen.

II

(*As* GOD (ADONAI) *begins to speak, a light is thrown upon the figure of Christ or the Cross. The veiled, shadowy figure kneeling at the altar will be faintly visible in this light. When* DEATH *is summoned he emerges halfway from the grave and awaits the end of* GOD'S *speech. Note that whenever* EVERYMAN'S *name is uttered it should be said slowly, not clipped; it must be* "EVERY MAN.")

GOD (ADONAI):

I perceive here in My majesty,
How all creatures be to Me unkind,
Living without dread in worldly prosperity:
Of ghostly sight the people be so blind,
Drowned in sin, they know Me not for their God!
In worldly riches is all their mind,
They fear not My stern justice, the sharp rod.
My law that I showed, when for them I died,
They forget clean, and shedding of My blood red.
I hanged between two, it cannot be denied;
To get them life I suffered to be dead:
I healed their feet, with thorns hurt was My head:

I could do no more than I did, truly!
But now I see the people do clean forsake Me.
Everyman liveth so after his own pleasure
And yet of his life he is nothing sure:
I see the more that I him forbear
The worse he is from year to year:
All that liveth impaireth fast
Therefore I will in all the haste
Have a reckoning of Everyman's person.
For if I leave the people thus alone
In their life of wicked tempests
Verily they will become much worse than beasts:
For now one would by envy another up eat;
Charity they all do quite forget.
I hoped well that Everyman
In My glory should make his mansion,
And thereto I had him all elect;
But now I see, like traitors deject,
He thanks me not for the joy I to him meant,
Nor yet for his being that I to him lent.
I proffered the people great multitude of mercy,
And few there be that asketh it heartily;
They be so cumbered with worldly riches,
That needs on them all I must do justice,
On Everyman living without fear.
Where art thou, Death, thou mighty messenger?

DEATH (*rising waist-high out of the grave, facing the altar. He speaks slowly and sonorously*):

Almighty God, I am here at Your will,
Your commandment to fulfill.

GOD:

Go thou to Everyman
And show him in My Name.
A pilgrimage he must on him take,
Which he in no wise may escape;
And that he bring with him a sure reckoning
Without delay or any tarrying.

DEATH (*mounting slowly from the grave and picking up his scythe, which has lain beside the grave. He faces the congregation. As he comes from the grave the floodlight out by the table is to be lighted*):

Lord, I will in the world go run over all,
And cruelly outsearch both great and small.
Everyman will I beset that liveth foully
Out of God's laws, and dreadeth not folly.
He that loveth riches I will strike with my dart,
His sight to blind, and from Heaven to depart
Except that alms be his good friend,
In hell for to dwell, world without end.

(DEATH *descends from the grave down to the front edge of the chancel, places his hour-glass beside the candlestick on the*

table, and mounts the pedestal there at the center, looming high in the floodlight above the congregation. If he casts a great shadow on the rear wall, so much the better: gigantic shadows will aid the eerie mood of the play. GOD *exits. If the time taken by* DEATH *is sufficient the choir may chant (Gregorian) some of these verses from Psalms 53 and 52:*

"The foolish one hath said in his heart; There is no God.

God looked down from Heaven upon the children of men: to see if there were any that would understand, and seek after God.

But they are gone out of the way, there is none that doeth good; no, not one.

Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength: but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in evil.

Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man?—the goodness of God endureth forever."

III

(EVERYMAN *walks jauntily up the center aisle, the full length of the nave. He strums nonchalantly at a lute and hums an aimless tune. He times his arrival at the front of the church to coincide with*

DEATH'S *words*: "*Everyman, stand still.*" *Before him walks a veiled lad or girl, clothed in filmy white, carrying a lighted candle—the candle of* EVERYMAN'S *earthly days—which he places in the candlestick on the table. The lad also carries* EVERYMAN'S *Book of Reckoning, a dog-eared leather-bound book with written and stained pages, to which it can be opened. He leaves it propped up by the candle. He then retires.*)

DEATH (*on the pedestal. Pointing*):

Lo, yonder I see Everyman walking.
Full little he thinketh on my coming:
His mind is on fleshly things and his treasure,
And great pain that shall cause him to endure
Before the Lord Heaven King.
(DEATH, *crosses himself.*)
Everyman, stand still! Whither art thou going
Thus gayly? Hast thou thy Maker forgot?

EVERYMAN (*flippantly*):

Why asketh thou?
Wouldst thou know?

DEATH:

Yea, sir, I will show you:
In great haste am I sent to thee
From God out of His majesty.

EVERYMAN (*incredulous and indifferently*):

What, sent to me?

(*He mounts the steps.*)

DEATH:

Yea, certainly.
Though thou hast forgot Him here,
He thinketh on thee in His Heavenly sphere,
As, ere we depart, thou shalt know.

EVERYMAN:

What desireth God of me?

DEATH:

That shall I show thee.
A reckoning He will needs have
Without any longer respite.

EVERYMAN (*still unimpressed*):

To give a reckoning longer leisure I crave.
This blind matter troubleth my wit.

DEATH (*stepping down to* EVERYMAN'S *level*):

On thee thou must take a long journey:
Therefore thy book of count with thee now bring:

(*He points to the book.*)

For return again thou canst not by no way.
And look thou be sure of thy reckoning;
For before God thou shalt answer, and show
Thy many bad deeds, and good but a few;
How thou hast spent thy life, and in what wise,

Before the chief Lord of Paradise.
Have ado that we were on the way,
For, wete thou well, thou shalt have none attournay.

EVERYMAN (*backing away; incredulous*):
Full unready I am such reckoning to give.
I know thee not. What messenger art thou?

DEATH (*following*):
I—am—Death! that no man dreadeth.
For Everyman I arrest and no man spareth:
For it is God's own commandment
That all to me must be obedient.

EVERYMAN (*now sick at heart with the sudden blow*):
O Death, thou comest when I had thee least in mind;
In thy power it lieth me to save;
Now of my goods will I give thee, if ye be so kind,
Yea, a thousand pound shalt thou have
And defer this matter till another day!

DEATH (*grimly, but with a sense of humor*):
Everyman, it may not be by no way.
I set not by gold, silver nor riches,
Nor by pope, emperor, king, duke, nor princes,
For an I would receive gifts great
All the world I might get!
But my custom is clean contrary.

I give thee no respite: come hence and not tarry.

EVERYMAN (*sinking on the pedestal-seat*):

Alas, shall I have no longer respite?
I may say Death giveth no warning!
To think on thee, it maketh my heart sick,
For all unready is my book of reckoning.
(*Everyman rises, gets the book, opens it, and shows the blotted pages.*)
But twelve year if I might have abiding
My counting book I would make so clear
That my reckoning I should not need to fear,
Wherefore, Death, I pray thee, for God's mercy,
Spare me till I be provided of remedy.
(*Sinks on the pedestal again.*)

DEATH:

Thee availeth not to cry, weep, and pray:
But haste thee quickly that you were gone this journey,
And prove thy friends if thou can.
For wete thou well, the time bideth for no man,
And in the world each living creature
For Adam's sin must die of nature.

EVERYMAN:

Death, if I should this pilgrimage take
And my reckoning surely make
Show me, for Saint Charity
Should I not come again shortly?

DEATH:

No, Everyman, an thou be once there
(*he points to the grave. Everyman winces*)
Thou mayst never more come here;
Trust me verily.

EVERYMAN (*mounting the pedestal, hands out, book at his feet.*)

O gracious God, in the high seat celestial
Have mercy on me in this most need!
(*To* DEATH, *a sudden thought striking him*)
Shall I have no company from this vale terrestrial
Of mine acquaintance that way me to lead?

DEATH (*laughing sardonically*):

Yea, if any be so hardy
That would go with thee and bear thee company.
(*Turning austere*)
Hie thee that you were gone to God's magnificence,
Thy reckoning to give before His presence.
What, weenest thou thy life is given thee,
And thy worldly goods also?

EVERYMAN (*ruefully*):

I had weened so, verily.

DEATH:

Nay, Nay; it was but lent thee:
For as soon as thou art gone

Another shall have it, and then go therefrom
Even as thou hast done.
Everyman, thou art mad: thou hast thy wits five,
And here on earth will not amend thy life,
For suddenly I do come!

EVERYMAN (*to himself*):

O wretched caitiff, whither shall I flee
That I might 'scape this endless sorrow!
(*To* DEATH)
Now, gentle Death, spare me till tomorrow,
That I may amend me
With good advisement?

DEATH:

Nay, thereto I will not consent,
Nor no man will I respite,
But to the heart suddenly I shall smite
(*he raises his scythe menacingly*)
Without any advisement.
(*He pauses.*)
Now out of thy sight I will me hie;
See thou make thee ready shortly,
For thou mayst say, this is the day
That no man living may 'scape away.

(DEATH *turns and strides away, mounting the steps and taking his stand at the grave's head. Here he silently watches the succeeding action, leaning on his scythe, as motionless as he can stand.*)

IV

EVERYMAN (*to himself*):

Alas! I may well weep with sighs deep;
Now have I no manner of company
To help me in my journey, and me to keep;
And also my writing is full unready.
(*He looks ruefully at the Book.*)
How shall I do now for to excuse me?
Would to God I had never been begot!
The time passeth: Lord, help, that all wrought!
For though I mourn, it availeth naught.
The day passeth, is almost agone:
I wot not well what for to do.
(*He paces to and fro, wringing his hands.* FELLOWSHIP *enters left rear and takes his seat on the Station, posing.*)
To whom were I best my complaint to make?
What if I to Fellowship thereof spake
(*As* EVERYMAN *names* FELLOWSHIP *the spotlight should be turned on, identifying him.*)
And showed him of this swift mischance?
For in him is all mine affiance;
We have in the world so many a day
Been good friends in sport and play.
(*Catches sight of him. Hopefully*)
I see him yonder certainly!
I trust that he will bear me company.

Therefore to him will I speak to ease my sorrow.
Well met, good Fellowship, and good morrow!

FELLOWSHIP (*rises from his seat, sweeps his feathered cap from his head in an exaggerated bow, and after the first line of his reply he advances with ostentatious camaraderie to* EVERYMAN'S *side.*)

Everyman! Good morrow, by this day!
Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?
If anything be amiss, I pray thee, say,
That I may help to remedy.

EVERYMAN (*hands on* FELLOWSHIP'S *shoulders*):

Yea, good Fellowship, yea.
I am in great jeopardy.

(*He sits.*)

FELLOWSHIP (*patting* EVERYMAN *jovially on the shoulder*):

My true friend, show to me your mind:
I will not forsake thee, to my life's end—
In the way of good company.

EVERYMAN:

That was well spoken, and lovingly.

FELLOWSHIP (*unctuously*):

Sir, I must needs know your heaviness:
I have pity to see you in any distress:
If any have you wronged, ye shall revengèd be
Though that I knew before that I should die.
Though I on the ground be slain for thee:

EVERYMAN:

Verily, Fellowship, gramercy!

FELLOWSHIP (*airily*):

Tush! by thy thanks I set not a straw:
Show me your grief, and say no more.

EVERYMAN:

If I my heart should to you break
And then you turned your mind from me,
And would not comfort me, when ye hear me speak,
Then should I ten times sorrier be.

FELLOWSHIP:

Sir, I say as I will do indeed.

EVERYMAN:

Then be you a good friend at need.
I have found you true here before.

FELLOWSHIP (*preening*):

And so ye shall find evermore.
For in faith, an thou go to hell
I will not forsake thee by the way.

EVERYMAN:

Ye speak like a true friend, I believe you well.
I shall deserve it, an I may.

FELLOWSHIP:

I speak of no deserving by this day.
For he that will say and nothing do
Is not worthy with good company to go:
Therefore, show me the grief of your mind
As to your friend most loving and kind.

EVERYMAN (*rising*):

I shall show you how it is:
Commanded I am to go a journey,
A long way, hard and dangerous
And give a straight count without delay
Before the high judge Adonai.
(*He crosses himself, and so does* FELLOWSHIP, *abashed.*)
Wherefore I pray you, bear me company,
As ye have promised, in this journey.

FELLOWSHIP (*drawing back and stammering*):

That is matter indeed! Promise is duty,
But, if I should take such voyage on me,
I know it well, it should be to my pain:
Also it maketh me afeared, certain.

EVERYMAN (*following him*):

Why, ye said if I had need
Ye would never forsake me, quick or dead,
Though it were to hell truly!

FELLOWSHIP:

So I said certainly:
But such pleasures be set aside, thee sooth to say.
And also if ye took such a journey
When should we come again?

EVERYMAN:

Nay, never again, until the Day of Doom.

FELLOWSHIP (*all subterfuge over*):

In faith, then will not I come there!
Who hath you these tidings brought?

EVERYMAN:

Indeed, Death was with me here.

FELLOWSHIP:

Now, by God that all hath bought,
If Death were the messenger,
For no man that is living today
I will go that loath journey—
Not for the father that begat me.

EVERYMAN (*desperately*):

Ye promised otherwise, pardie.

FELLOWSHIP:

I wot well I said so, truly,
And yet if thou wilt eat and drink and make good cheer
I would not forsake you, while the day is clear—
Trust me verily!

EVERYMAN (*angrily*):

Yea, thereto ye would be ready:
To go to mirth, solace, and play.
Your mind ye would sooner apply
Than to bear me company in my long journey.

FELLOWSHIP:

Now in good faith, I will not that way.
But if thou wouldest murder, or any man kill
In that I will help thee with a good will.

EVERYMAN (*pleading*):

O that is a simple advice indeed!
Gentle Fellowship, help me in my necessity:
We have loved long and now I need;
Now, gentle Fellowship, remember me!

FELLOWSHIP (*wresting himself free, and speaking incisively*):

Whether ye have loved me or no,
By Saint John, I will not with thee go.

EVERYMAN (*asking half a loaf*):

Yet I pray thee, do so much for me
To bring me forward, for Saint Charity,
And comfort me—till I come without the town.

FELLOWSHIP (*with gestures of finality*):

Nay, an thou would give me a new gown,
I will not a foot with thee go.
(*Now he is free and walks backward away from* EVERYMAN, *his spirits rising as he puts space between them.*)
But if you had tarried I would not have left thee so.
As it is now, God speed thee in thy journey,
For from thee I will depart as fast as I may.

EVERYMAN (*arms out in entreaty*):

Whither away, Fellowship? Will you forsake me?

FELLOWSHIP (*callously laughing. Now he stands on the platform of the Station, left rear*):

Yea, by my fay; to God I commend thee.

EVERYMAN (*dazed and numb*):

Farewell, Good Fellowship; for this my heart
is sore:
Adieu for ever, I shall see thee no more.

FELLOWSHIP (*simulating sorrow, ironically*):

In faith, Everyman, farewell now at the end:
For you I will remember that parting is
mourning.

(*He bows low, mockingly, then sniffs into his lace handkerchief and goes laughing away. The light which illuminated the Station goes out.*)

V

EVERYMAN (*nervelessly and forlorn, he slumps on the pedestal*):

Alack! Shall we thus depart indeed,
O Lady of Help, without any more comfort?
Lo, Fellowship forsaketh me in my most need:
For help in this world whither shall I resort?
Fellowship heretofore with me would merry
make,
And now little sorrow for me doth he take.
It is said, in prosperity men friends may find
Which in adversity be full unkind.
Now whither for succour shall I flee
Since that Fellowship hath forsaken me?

(*In sudden hope*)

To my kinsmen I will truly,
(KINDRED *and* COUSIN *enter, left, rear.*)
Praying them to help me in my necessity:
I believe that they will do so,
For kin will creep where it may not go.
(*Spotlight turned on; illuminating them.* EVERYMAN *rises.*)
I will go say, for yonder I see them go.
Where be ye now, my friends and kinsmen?

KINDRED:

Here we be now at your commandment.
Cousin, I pray you show us your intent
In any wise, and not spare.
(*Both* KINDRED *and* COUSIN *speak smugly. They always keep close together, obviously depending on each other for support; looking for permission or approval before speaking. They come forward and stand side by side, serenely self-satisfied, well front.*)

COUSIN:

Yea, Everyman, to us declare
If ye be disposed to go any whither,
For wete you well, we will live and die together.

KINDRED (*nodding blandly*):

In wealth or woe we will with you hold,
For over his kin a man may be bold.
(COUSIN *approves the sentiment.*)

EVERYMAN (*breathlessly pouring out his tale*):

Gramercy, my friends and kinsmen kind.
Now shall I show you the grief of my mind:
I was commanded by a—a messenger
That is—an high king's chief officer:
(EVERYMAN *looks over his shoulder at* DEATH.)
He bade me go a pilgrimage to my pain,
And I know well I shall never come again:
Also I must give a reckoning straight,
For I have a great enemy that hath me in wait,
Which intendeth me for to hinder.

KINDRED (*only slightly interested*):

What account is that which ye must render?
That would I know.

EVERYMAN:

Of all my works I must show
How I have lived, and my days spent:
Also of ill deeds that I have used
In my time, since life was me lent,
And of all virtues that I have refused.
(*He points toward* DEATH *and the grave.*)
Therefore I pray you go thither with me
To help to make mine account, for Saint Charity.
(KINDRED *and* COUSIN, *now aware of* DEATH, *are visibly chilled. They look at each other and nod their mutual understanding.*)

COUSIN:

What! To go thither? Is that the matter?
Nay, Everyman, I had liefer fast bread and water
All this five year and more.

EVERYMAN:

Alas, that ever I was born!
For now shall I never be merry,
If that you forsake me.

KINDRED:

What, sir? Ye be a merry man!
Take good heart to you, and make no moan.
But one thing I warn you, by Saint Anne
As for me, ye go alone.

EVERYMAN:

My cousin, will you not with me go?

COUSIN (*inventing a ridiculous reason, and showing that he knows it*):

No, by our lady, I—I have the cramp in my toe:
Trust not to me: for, so God me speed
I will deceive you in your most need.

KINDRED (*breaking in, sarcastically*):

It availeth not us to entice.
Ye may have my maid with all my heart:
She loveth to go to feasts, there to be nice,
And to dance, and abroad to start:
I will give her leave to help you in that journey—
If that you and she may agree.

EVERYMAN (*disgusted*):

Now show me the very effect of your mind.
Will you go with me, or abide behind?

KINDRED:

Abide behind? Yea, that I will if I may!
Therefore farewell until another day.
(*She starts to leave, front left.*)

EVERYMAN:

How should I be merry or glad?
For fair promises they to me make
But when I have most need, they me forsake,
I am deceived, that maketh me sad.

COUSIN (*While* KINDRED *twitches impatiently at his gown*):

Cousin Everyman, farewell now,
For verily, I will not go with you.
(*Superciliously*)
Also of mine own an unready reckoning
I have to account; therefore I make tarrying.
Now God keep thee, for now I go!
(*Out they go, left, front. Light on the Station off.*)

VI

EVERYMAN (*leaning on the rail, or other support, and looking after them*):

Ah, Jesu; is all come hereto?
Lo, fair words make fools feign:
They promise and nothing will do certain.

My kinsmen promised me faithfully
For to abide with me steadfastly,
And now fast away do they flee:
Even so Fellowship promised me.
(Goods *enters left rear and takes his seat on the Station.*)
What friend were best me of to provide?
I lose my time here longer to abide.
(*Steps uncertainly to and fro.*)
Yet in my mind a thing there is
All my life have I loved riches:
If that my Goods now help me might
(*Spotlight turned on to illuminate* Goods, *who sits asleep on his Station*)
It would make my heart full light.
I will speak to him in this distress.
(*Loudly*)
Where art thou, my Goods and riches?

Goods (*sleepily stirring at the summons, yawns and covers it with jeweled fingers to his lips. Fondling his money-bag, he does not rise.*):
Who calleth me? Everyman? What haste thou hast!
I sit here in corners trussed and piled so high,
And in chests I am locked so fast,
Also sacked in bags, thou mayest see with thine eye
I cannot stir; in packs, lo, where I lie!
(*Yawns again*)

What would ye have, lightly me say.

EVERYMAN (*going part way to meet him*):

Come hither, Goods, in all the haste thou may
For of counsel I must require thee.

GOODS (*arising slowly, and coming reluctantly to* EVERYMAN. *He wheezes and sways as he walks.*):

Sir, an ye in the world have trouble or adversity,
That can I help you to remedy shortly.

EVERYMAN:

It is another disease that grieveth me;
In this world it is not, I tell thee so.
I am sent for, another way to go,
To give a straight account general
Before the highest Jupiter of all.
(*He crosses himself.* GOODS *blinks in puzzlement.*)
All my life I have had joy or pleasure in thee.
(GOODS *bows his thanks.*)
Therefore, I pray thee, go with me,
For peradventure, thou mayst before God Almighty
My reckoning help to clean and purify,
For it is said ever among
That money maketh all right that is wrong.

GOODS (*chuckles and waggles an admonitory finger at* EVERYMAN):

Nay, Everyman, I sing another song,

I follow no man in such voyages:
For an I went with thee
Thou shouldst fare much the worse for me.
For because on me thou didst set thy mind
Thy reckoning I have made so blotted and blind,
(*he takes the book from* Everyman *and shows him the untidy pages*)
That thine account thou cannot make truly.
(*Gives back the book.*)
And that hast thou for the love of me.

Everyman:

Up! Let us go thither together!

Goods (*enjoying the joke*):

Nay, not so, I am too brittle; I may not endure:
I follow no man one foot, be ye sure.

Everyman (*arm about* Goods, *wheedling*):

Alas, I have thee loved, and had great pleasure
All my life-days on my Goods and treasure.

Goods (*absolutely without pity*):

That is to thy damnation without lessing,
For my love is contrary to the love everlasting,
But if thou had me loved moderately during,
As, to the poor give part of me,
Then shouldst thou not in this dolour be
Nor in this great sorrow and care.

EVERYMAN:

Lo, now was I deceived, ere I was ware,
And, all, I may blame on thee my misspent time.

GOODS (*peering up into* EVERYMAN'S *face*):

What, weenest thou that I am thine?

EVERYMAN (*shortly*):

I had weened so.

GOODS (*leaning back, hands on hips*):

Nay, Everyman, I say no:
As for a while I was lent thee,
A season thou hast had me in prosperity:
My condition is man's soul to kill;
If I save one, a thousand I do spill.
Weenest thou that I will follow thee?
Nay, not from this world, verily.

EVERYMAN:

I had weened otherwise.

GOODS (*carrying it too far*):

Therefore, to thy soul Goods is a thief,
For when thou art dead, this is my guise,
Another to deceive in the same wise,
As I have done thee, and all to his soul's reprief.

EVERYMAN (*storming at* GOODS, *his indignation sweeping him up onto the pedestal, where he towers above his cynical betrayer*):

O false Goods, cursed may thou be!
Thou traitor to God, thou hast deceived me
And caught me in thy snare.

GOODS (*unimpressed*):

Marry, thou brought thyself in care,
Whereof I am right glad:
I must needs laugh, I cannot be sad.

EVERYMAN (*his anger turning to self-pity*):

Ah, Goods, thou hast had long my hearty love.
I gave thee that which should be the Lord's above:
(GOODS *is lumbering away, toward left rear*)
But wilt thou not go with me indeed?
I pray thee truth to say.

GOODS (*turns on the Station dais, in its full light. He takes much time for his answer*):

No! So God me speed:
Therefore farewell. And have good day!
(*Jingling his purse and chuckling, he sways out. The light is turned off.*)

EVERYMAN (*kneeling, with arms outstretched across the pedestal. If desired the recapitulation can be omitted from this speech*):

O to whom shall I make my moan
For to go with me in that heavy journey?
(First Fellowship said he would with me gone:
His words were very pleasant and gay;
But afterward he left me alone.
Then spake I to my kinsmen all in despair

And also they gave words fair.
They lacked no fair speaking,
But all forsake me in the ending.
Then went I to my Goods that I loved best
In hope to find comfort, and there had I least:
For my Goods sharply did me tell
That he bringeth many into hell.
Then of myself I was ashamed
And so I am worthy to be blamed:
Thus may I well myself hate.
Of whom shall I now counsel take?)

(*During this soliloquy* GOOD DEEDS *is helped to the Station* (*right, rear*) *by* KNOWLEDGE. GOOD DEEDS *lies weakly upon the long seat there.*)

I think that I shall never speed
Till that I go to my Good Deeds:

(*Spotlight illuminates* GOOD DEEDS *and* KNOWLEDGE.)

But alas! she is so weak
That she can neither go nor speak:
Yet will I venture on her now.
My Good Deeds, where be you?

(EVERYMAN *does not see* GOOD DEEDS *until she speaks. Whereat he rises, gathers up his book, and steps hesitatingly toward her. He mounts the step of the grave-platform, opens his book on its top, and holds his colloquy thence.*)

GOOD DEEDS (*very weakly, panting between her words*):

Here . . . I lie . . . cold . . . in the ground;
Thy sins . . . have me . . . so . . . sore . . . bound,
That I cannot . . . . . stir!

EVERYMAN: O Good Deeds, I stand in fear
I must you pray of counsel,
For help now should come right well.

GOOD DEEDS:

Everyman, . . . have . . . understanding
That ye be . . . summoned . . . account to make . . .
Before Messias, of Jerusalem King: . . .
If you go with me, . . . that journey . . with you . . . I will take.

EVERYMAN (*eagerly*):

Therefore I come to you, my moan to make;
I pray you that ye will go with me.

GOOD DEEDS (*strives to rise, but falls back*):

I would . . . full fain, . . . but . . . I cannot . . . stand . . . verily.

EVERYMAN:

Why, is there anything on you fall?

GOOD DEEDS:

Yea, sir, I may thank you for all.
If ye had perfectly cheered me . . .
Your book of account full ready now had be.
(*Pointing to the book.*)
Look, the book of your works and deeds eke.

Oh, see how they lie under the feet
To your soul's heaviness.

EVERYMAN (*standing and apostrophizing high Heaven*):

Our Lord Jesus, help me!
(*Lifts the book and holds it out.*)
For one letter herein I cannot see.

GOOD DEEDS:

Here is a blind reckoning . . . in time of distress.

EVERYMAN (*kneeling on the grave-platform to* GOOD DEEDS):

Good Deeds, I pray you, help me in this need,
Or else I am forever damned indeed!
Therefore help me to make reckoning
Before the Redeemer of all thing,
That King is and was and ever shall.

GOOD DEEDS:

Everyman, I am sorry of your fall—
And fain would I help you, if I were able.

EVERYMAN (*in despair*):

Good Deeds, your counsel, I pray you, give me!

GOOD DEEDS:

That shall I do . . . verily,
Though that on my feet . . . I may not go,
I have a sister that shall with you also, . . .
(*she points to* KNOWLEDGE, *who smiles encouragingly*)

Called Knowledge . . . which shall with you abide
To help you . . . to make . . . that dreadful . . . reckoning.

KNOWLEDGE:

Everyman, I will go with thee and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.
(*She descends from the Station.* EVERYMAN *comes forward, too.*)

EVERYMAN (*radiant*):

In good condition I am now in everything
And am wholly content with this good thing:
Thanked be God, my Creator!

GOOD DEEDS (*a little stronger*):

And when He hath brought thee there
Where thou shalt heal thee of thy smart,
Then go you with your Reckoning and your Good Deeds together
For to make you joyful at heart
Before the blessed Trinity.

EVERYMAN (*hastening back to kiss her hand*):

My Good Deeds, I thank thee heartfully:
I am well content certainly
With your words sweet.

KNOWLEDGE (*taking* EVERYMAN *by the hand and, drawing him front left*):

Now go we together lovingly
To Confession, that cleansing river.

EVERYMAN:

For joy I weep: I would that we were there:
But I pray you, give me cognition
Where dwelleth that holy one, Confession?

KNOWLEDGE:

In the House of Salvation:
We shall find him in that place
That shall comfort us by God's grace.

VII

(*The choir sings the De Profundis as* CONFESSION *enters, left front, and mounts his pedestal. He arranges the white garment of contrition over the kneeling-desk, and holds the scourge in his hand.* KNOWLEDGE *brings* EVERYMAN *to the kneeling-desk.*)

THE CHOIR (*chanting*):

Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord; Lord hear my voice.
O let Thine ears consider well: the voice of my complaint.
If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss: O Lord, who may abide it?
For there is mercy with Thee: therefore shalt Thou be feared.
I look for the Lord: my soul doth wait for Him: in His word is my trust.
My soul fleeth unto the Lord: before the

morning watch, I say, before the morning watch.

O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him is plenteous redemption.

And He shall redeem Israel: from all his sins.

KNOWLEDGE (*continuing*):

Lo, this is Confession: kneel down and ask mercy,

For he is good conceit with God Almighty.

EVERYMAN (*kneels and prays earnestly, not to* CONFESSION, *but to Heaven, except the last two lines, which are to* CONFESSION):

O Glorious fountain that all uncleanness doth clarify,

Wash from me the spots of vices unclean,

That on me no sin may be seen!

Now I pray you, shrift, the bringer of Salvation

Help hither my Good Deeds for my piteous exclamation.

CONFESSION (*tenderly*):

I know your sorrow well, Everyman;

Because with Knowledge ye come to me,

I will you comfort as well as I can:

And a precious jewel I will give thee,

Called Penance, wise voider of adversity.

(*He holds up the scourge*)

Therewith shall thy body chastised be

With abstinence and perseverance in God's service:
Here shall you receive that scourge of me
(*He gives* EVERYMAN *the scourge*)
Which is penance strong that ye must endure.
Remember thy Saviour was scourged for thee
With sharp scourges, and suffered it patiently:
So must thou, ere thou pass thy pilgrimage.
Knowledge keep him in this voyage,
And by that time Good Deeds will be with thee:
Ask God mercy and He will grant truly.
When with the scourge of penitence man doth him bind
The oil of forgiveness then shall he find.

EVERYMAN (*rising*):

Thanked be God for His gracious work!
For now I will my penance begin.
(*He goes to the central pedestal and mounts it.* KNOWLEDGE *brings the garment of Contrition and stands beside and below him.*)
This hath rejoiced and lighted my heart,
Though the knots be painful and hard within.
(*He fingers the knots, ruefully smiling.*)

KNOWLEDGE:

Everyman, look your penance that ye fulfill
Whatever pain it to you be.

And Knowledge shall give you counsel at will
How your account ye shall make clearly.

EVERYMAN (*hands the scourge to* KNOWLEDGE *and strips off his jacket, appearing clad above the waist in a white loose shirt.*)

Knowledge, give me the scourge of penitence:
My flesh therewith shall give aquittance:
I will now begin, God give me grace.

KNOWLEDGE:

Everyman, God give you time and space:
Thus I bequeath you in the hands of our Saviour,
Thus may you make your reckoning sure.

EVERYMAN:

In the name of the Holy Trinity,
My body sore punished shall be:
(*He applies the scourge, timing the blows to the naturally accented words.*)
Take this body for the sin of the flesh!
Also thou delightest to go gay and fresh
And in the way of damnation thou did me bring!
Therefore suffer thou now strokes and punishment!
(*As* EVERYMAN *smites,* GOOD DEEDS *rises stronger and stronger, and stands.*)

GOOD DEEDS (*exultantly*):

I thank God, now I can walk and go,
And am delivered of my sickness and woe!

Therefore with Everyman I will go, and not spare:
His good works I will help him to declare.
(*As* KNOWLEDGE *speaks*, GOOD DEEDS *picks up the Book and comes forward to* EVERYMAN'S *side, right.*)

KNOWLEDGE:

Now, Everyman, be merry and glad;
Your Good Deeds cometh now, ye may not be sad;
Now is your Good Deeds whole and sound,
Going upright upon the ground.

EVERYMAN:

My heart is light and shall be evermore:
Now will I smite faster than I did before.
(*He suits the action to the word.*)

GOOD DEEDS (*staying him*):

Everyman, pilgrim, my special friend,
Blessed be thou without end;
For thee is prepared eternal glory.
Ye have made me whole and sound
Therefore will I bide with thee the whole world round.

EVERYMAN:

Welcome, my Good Deeds; now I hear thy voice,
I weep for very sweetness of love.

KNOWLEDGE:

Be no more sad, but evermore rejoice.
God seeth thy living from His throne above:

(*She holds up the white shroud of Contrition*)

Put on this garment to thy behove
Which with thy tears is wet,
Lest before God ye be unsweet
When ye to your journey's end come shall.

EVERYMAN:

Gentle Knowledge, what do ye it call?

KNOWLEDGE:

It is the garment of sorrow,
From pain it will you borrow:
Contrition it is,
That getteth forgiveness;
It pleaseth God passing well.

GOOD DEEDS:

Everyman, will you wear it for your heal?

(EVERYMAN *dons the garment.*)

EVERYMAN:

Now blessed be Jesu, Mary's son:
For now have I on true contrition.
Let us go now without tarrying:
Good Deeds, have we clear our reckoning?

GOOD DEEDS:

Yea, indeed I have it here.

EVERYMAN (*descending from the pedestal*):

Then I trust we need not fear.
Now, friends, let us not part in twain.

KNOWLEDGE:

Nay, Everyman, that we will not certain.

GOOD DEEDS (*stopping* EVERYMAN *as he urges them on*):

Yet must thou lead with thee
Three persons of great might.

EVERYMAN:

Who should they be?

GOOD DEEDS:

Discretion and Strength they hight
And thy Beauty may not abide behind.

(*As their names are mentioned, these characters enter, left and right rear: stepping into the illumination of the spot-lights there.*)

KNOWLEDGE:

Also ye must call to mind
Your Five-Wits as for your counselors.

EVERYMAN:

How shall I get them hither?

KNOWLEDGE:

You must call them all together,
And they will hear you incontinent.

EVERYMAN (*facing rear*):

My friends, come hither and be present!
Discretion, Strength, my Five-Wits, and Beauty!

(*They group themselves, with* STRENGTH *in the front center of the grave-platform, and the three others across the step below him.* DISCRETION, BEAUTY, FIVE-WITS.)

BEAUTY:

Here we be at your will; we be all ready:
What will ye that we should do?

GOOD DEEDS (*front, right*):

That ye would with Everyman go,
And help him in his pilgrimage;
Advise you, will ye with him or not in that voyage.

STRENGTH (*largely and bluffly*):

We will bring him all thither,
To his help and comfort, ye may believe me.

DISCRETION (*cautiously; tight gestures, elbows nipped to her sides*):

So will we go with him, all together.

EVERYMAN (*goes to them, stands below them all, center, faces the congregation, flings out his arms, and cries out*):

Almighty God, lovéd thou be!
I give Thee laud that I have hither brought
Strength, Discretion, Beauty, Five-Wits: lack I naught!
And My Good Deeds, with Knowledge clear,
All be in my company at my will here!
I desire no more to my business.

STRENGTH (*lifting his sword high*):

And I, Strength, will by you stand in distress,
Though thou would in battle fight on the ground.

FIVE-WITS (*likewise declamatory*):

And though it were through the world round
We will not depart for sweet nor sour.

BEAUTY (*vapidly*):

No more will I unto death's hour
Whatsoever thereof befall.

DISCRETION:

Everyman, advise you first of all
Go with a good advisement and deliberation.
We all give you virtuous monition
That all shall be well.

EVERYMAN:

My friends, hearken what I will tell.
I pray God reward you in His heavenly sphere.
(*Speaking directly to the congregation*)
Now hearken, all that be here:
For I will make my testament
Here before you all present:
In alms half my good I will give with my hands twain
In the way of charity with good intent,
And the other half still shall remain
In quiet to be returned there it ought to be.
This I do in despite of the fiend of hell,
To go quit out of his peril
Ever after and this day.

KNOWLEDGE (*going to him*):

Everyman hearken what I say:
Go to priesthood, I you advise

And receive of him in any wise
The holy sacrament and ointment together
And shortly see ye turn again hither,
We will all abide you here.

FIVE-WITS (*over* EVERYMAN'S *shoulder*):

Yea. Everyman, hie you that ye ready were:
There is no emperor, king, duke, nor baron
That of God hath commission
As hath the least priest in the world being;
For of the blessed sacraments pure and benign
He beareth the keys, and thereof hath cure
For man's redemption, it is ever sure
Which God for our soul's medicine
Gave us out of his heart with great pain,
Here in this transitory life for thee and me.

EVERYMAN:

Fain would I receive that holy body,
And meekly to my ghostly father I will go.

FIVE-WITS:

Everyman, God gave priests that dignity
To set them in His stead among us to be:
Thus be they above angels in degree.

KNOWLEDGE:

If priests be good, it is so surely.

FIVE-WITS:

Therefore let us priesthood honor
And follow their doctrine for our soul's succour:
We be their sheep and they our shepherds be,

By whom we all be kept in surety.

(*Procession to the side chapel,* CONFESSION *leading, then* EVERYMAN, KNOWLEDGE, *and* GOOD DEEDS *next.* DEATH *comes down from the grave, bringing up the rear of the procession.* FIVE-WITS, BEAUTY, STRENGTH, *and* DISCRETION *maintain their grouping.* DEATH *stops in the doorway of the chapel (or at the rear of the group at the side altar) keeping grim guard. During the singing of the choir the priest* (CONFESSION) *may be seen standing above* EVERYMAN, *who kneels at the rail; if desired he may even hold the chalice and paten as if administering the sacrament.*)

THE CHOIR (*sings the ancient hymn*):

Ye watchers and ye holy ones,
Bright seraphs, cherubim, and thrones,
Raise the glad strain, Alleluia!
Cry out, dominions, princedoms, powers,
Virtues, archangels, angels' choirs,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

(O higher than the cherubim.
More glorious than the seraphim,
Lead their praises, Alleluia!
Thou bearer of the eternal word,
Most gracious, magnify the Lord,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!)

O friends in gladness let us sing,
Supernal anthems echoing,
Alleluia, Alleluia!
To God, the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!
Amen.

VIII

(EVERYMAN *returns, receiving a pilgrim's staff with a cross-piece near the top. As he sets out* DEATH *stands aside.* EVERYMAN *leads the procession back,* GOOD DEEDS *and* KNOWLEDGE *following. Then* DEATH *brings up the rear, pausing beside the table with its burning candle, where he remains standing through the remainder of the Morality, until the end.*)

FIVE-WITS:

Peace, for yonder I see Everyman come,
Which hath made true satisfaction.

BEAUTY:

Methinketh it is he indeed.

EVERYMAN (*mounting the steps to the chancel and facing the four who await him*):

I have received the sacrament for my redemption
And mine extreme unction:
Blessed be all they that counseled me to take it!

And now, friends, let us go without longer respite:
I thank God that ye have tarried so long.
(*He mounts the steps to the grave, right. The four elude him, descending, left. He stretches out the cross-end of his staff.*)
Now set each of you on this rod your hand
And shortly follow me:
I go before: there I would be. God be our guide!
(*They decline to touch the staff, grouped left on the step and chancel floor.*)

STRENGTH (*falteringly*):
Everyman, we will not from you go
Till ye have gone this voyage long.

DISCRETION (*edging away*):
I, Discretion, will bide by you also.

KNOWLEDGE (*following* EVERYMAN *up the steps*):
And though this pilgrimage be never so strong
I will never part you from!

EVERYMAN (*going to the head of the grave and looking down into it. He stays himself by his staff as he falters*):
Alas! I am so faint I may not stand;
My limbs under me do fold.
(*He notes that the four edge away.*)
Friends, let us not turn again to this land
(*He gestures toward the front*)
Not for all the world's gold!

For into this cave must I creep,
And turn to the earth, and there to sleep.

BEAUTY (*with a horrified shriek*):

What, into this grave? Alas!

EVERYMAN:

Yea, there shall ye consume more and less.

BEAUTY (*in flight*):

And what, should I smother there?

EVERYMAN (*with no repugnance for the grave*):

Yea, by my faith, and never more appear:
In this world live no more we shall,
But in Heaven before the highest Lord of all.

(EVERYMAN *is mystically serene, but puzzled.*)

BEAUTY (*at the front, left*):

I cross out all this: Adieu, by Saint John;
I take my cap in my lap and am gone!

EVERYMAN (*dazed*):

What, Beauty? Whither will ye?

BEAUTY (*hysterically afraid*):

Peace! I am deaf. I look not behind me,
Not an thou would give me all the gold in thy chest.

(*She flees away, left, front*)

EVERYMAN (*dealt a bitter blow*):

Alas! whereto may I now trust?
Beauty doth fast away hie:
She promised with me to live and die.

STRENGTH (*brutally*):

Everyman; I will thee also forsake and deny.

Thy game liketh me not at all.

EVERYMAN (*pleadingly*):

Why then ye will forsake me all?
Sweet Strength, tarry a little space.

STRENGTH:

Nay, sir, by the rood of grace
I will hie me from thee fast,
Though thou weep till thy heart brast.

EVERYMAN:

Ye would ever bide by me, ye said.

STRENGTH (*with finality of hard-heartedness*):

Yea, I have you far enough conveyed:
Ye be old enough, I understand,
Your pilgrimage to take on hand:
I repent me that I hither came.

EVERYMAN:

Strength, you to displease I am to blame:
Will you break promise that is debt?

STRENGTH (*at front, left*):

In faith, I care not:
Thou art but a fool to complain;
You spend your speech and waste your brain.
Go, thrust thee into the ground!

(*He strides away, after* BEAUTY)

EVERYMAN (*sinking to his knees, now that* STRENGTH *is gone, and speaking after him, piteously*):

I had weened surer I should you have found.
He that trusteth in his Strength
She him deceiveth at the length.

Both Strength and Beauty forsaketh me,
Yet they promised me fair and lovingly.

DISCRETION (*gliding with catlike steps away*):
Everyman, I will after Strength be gone;
As for me I will leave you alone.

EVERYMAN (*distraught, but not contending*):
Why Discretion, will ye forsake me?

DISCRETION (*gliding further away*):
Yea, in faith, I will go from thee,
For when Strength goeth before
I follow after, evermore.

EVERYMAN:
Yet, I pray thee, for the love of the Trinity,
Look in my grave once piteously.

DISCRETION (*cannily, implying a trap*):
Nay, so nigh will I not come.
Farewell, everyone!
(*She glides away, on tiptoe.*)

EVERYMAN:
O all things faileth, save God alone;
Beauty, Strength, and Discretion;
For when Death bloweth his blast
They all run from me full fast.

FIVE-WITS (*reluctantly and pityingly*):
Everyman, my leave now of thee I take:
I will follow the others, for here I thee forsake.

EVERYMAN (*hand dazedly to his eyes*):
Alas! Then may I wail and weep,
For I took you for my best friend.

FIVE-WITS:

I may no longer thee keep:
Now farewell and there an end.

(*"There" is the grave. She points. Then slowly and inexorably leaves. Left, front.*)

EVERYMAN (*spent; at the bottom of his grief*):

O Jesu, help! All hath forsaken me!

GOOD DEEDS (*mounting the grave-platform*):

Nay, Everyman, I will bide with thee!

(EVERYMAN *staggers to his feet, a smile lighting his white face.*)

I will not forsake thee indeed;
Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.

EVERYMAN:

Gramercy, Good Deeds, now may I true friends see.
They have forsaken me every one:
I loved them better than my Good Deeds alone.
Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?

KNOWLEDGE (*with utmost tenderness*):

Yea, Everyman, when ye to Death do go:
But not yet for no manner of danger.

EVERYMAN:

Gramercy, Knowledge, with all my heart.

KNOWLEDGE:

Nay, yet I will not from hence depart
Till I see where ye shall come.

(DEATH *picks up the hour-glass and holds it high, for* EVERYMAN *to see.*)

EVERYMAN:

Methinketh, alas! that I must be gone,
To make my reckoning and my debts pay,
For I see my time is nigh spent away.
(*To the congregation*)
Take example, all ye that this do hear or see
How they that I loved best do forsake me,
Except my Good Deeds that bideth truly.

GOOD DEEDS (*to the congregation*):

All earthly things be but vanity.
Beauty, Strength and Discretion, do man forsake,
Foolish friends and kinsmen, that fair spake,
All fleeth save Good Deeds and that am I.

EVERYMAN (*crossing himself as he peers into the grave*):

Have mercy on me, God most mighty.

GOOD DEEDS (*stepping down into the grave*):

Fear not, I will speak for thee.

EVERYMAN (*with transfigured countenance*):

Here—I—cry—God—mercy!!!

GOOD DEEDS (*still visible*):

Short our end and minish our pain:
Let us go and never come again!
(*Disappears from view*)

EVERYMAN (*Giving his staff to* KNOWLEDGE *and stepping down one step with each sentence, with perfect quietness*):

Into thy hands Lord, my soul I commend;
Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost:
As thou me boughtest, so me defend,
And save me from the fiend's boast,
That I may appear with that blessed host
That shall be saved at the Day of Doom.
In manus tuas—
Commendo
Spiritum
Meum!

(*He disappears from view. As he does so,* DEATH *extinguishes the candle with one sweep of his hand, turns the hour-glass on its side, and kneels. All lights out except that which shines on* KNOWLEDGE. *The light on the Christ-figure is turned on.*)

IX

KNOWLEDGE (*to the Congregation; from the Grave's head*):
Now hath he suffered that all shall endure.
The Good Deeds shall make all sure.
Now hath he made ending:
Methinketh that I hear angels sing
And make great joy and melody
Where Everyman's soul received shall be.

(*The choir sings softly the Alleluias from the preceding hymn, "Ye watchers and*

Ye holy ones." KNOWLEDGE *turns and goes to kneel at the altar or wherever* ADONAI *originally knelt and all lights except that on the Christ-figure are extinguished. During the silence, the* ANGEL *enters and stands at the head of the grave. Cardboards with only a narrow vertical slit opening are put over the spotlight lenses and the lights are shifted to focus on the* ANGEL, *then turned on. The* ANGEL *should thus be illuminated from the sides, against a background and foreground of darkness.*)

THE ANGEL OF RESURRECTION (*speaking into the grave*):

Come, excellent elect spouse to Jesus
Here above thou shalt go,
Because of thy singular virtue:
Now thy soul is taken the body fro,
Thy reckoning is crystal clear:
Now shalt thou into the heavenly sphere
(*she lifts her eyes to the congregation*)
Unto the which all ye shall come
That liveth well unto the Day of Doom.

(*The* ANGEL *remains motionless. The* DOCTOR *mounts to the pulpit* (*light on therein*) *and pauses a moment for silence. Then slowly he addresses the congregation, which shall kneel.*)

X

THE DOCTOR:

This memory all men may have in mind;
Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and young,
And forsake Pride, for he deceiveth you in the end,
And remember Beauty, Five-Wits, Strength, and Discretion,
They all at last do Everyman forsake,
Save his Good Deeds; them he doth take:
But beware, for, e'en an they be small,
Before God he hath no help at all;
None excuse may be there for Everyman:
Alas! how shall he do then?
For after death amends may no man make,
For then mercy and pity doth him forsake;
If his reckoning be not clear, when he doth come,
God will say, Ite, maledicti, in ignem æternum;
But he that hath his account whole and sound,
High in Heaven he shall be crowned;
Unto which place God bring us all thither,
That we may live body and soul together;
Thereto help the Trinity:
Amen, say ye, for Saint Charity.

(*The choir sings a sevenfold amen. The congregation then rises and leaves the*

church in complete silence, while all the players and the choir hold their places. When the congregation has gone from the church the choir and players rise while the DOCTOR *or the minister of the parish offers a brief prayer and gives the benediction. Silent recessional.*)

"THUS ENDETH THIS MORALL PLAY OF THE SUMMONING OF EVERYMAN, AMEN."

Elijah

An Oratorio

(PART ONE)

THE MUSIC

BY

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

A

DRAMATIZED ADAPTATION

IN THE FORM OF

A Sung Miracle Play

✠

(The version utilized in this adaptation is G. Schirmer's version, New York, which is a standard American one, probably already in the library of most choirs. With other versions other page numbers, etc., will be necessary.)

ELIJAH

AN ORATORIO

THE old-time Miracle Plays were, after all, directly in the line of dramatic descent from the ancient Tragedies of Hellas. Choir and chorus closely resemble each other; each type of play adds to the choir a few free-moving protagonists. But even more, of course, the worship-spirit pervades both forms of drama alike. The congregation is no mere audience.

We may therefore adapt such an Oratorio as "Elijah" as a sung Miracle Play with close affinity for Greek drama forms. The adaptation given herewith utilizes the choir as a stationary (but not immobile) chorus, but adds a smaller, free-moving group, which may either sing or act in pantomime against the choir's singing. The soloists are likewise free-moving.

The music of the oratorio is not published in this volume. The cuts and shifts of the standard text are indicated; but with this guide to dramatic adaptation the copies of the oratorio as published will easily suffice.

It is recommended that at least the major choruses be memorized by the choir. Otherwise some camouflage of the music copies will be neces-

sary. The soloists must surely memorize their rôles. The success of a dramatized version depends on this.

SETTING

I

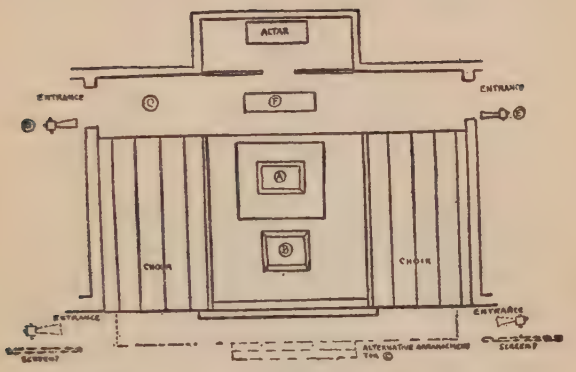
FOR A CHURCH WITH A CHANCEL

Between the choir stalls are built two altars, the rear one (Jehovah's) (A) higher than the front one (Baal's) (B). The altars are of convenient size, made of wall-board on frames, painted to imitate rough stone. The platform on which the altar to Jehovah stands must not be so high as to obscure the level (C) where the second episode (of the widow's son) is played, unless this episode is played at the front of the chancel.

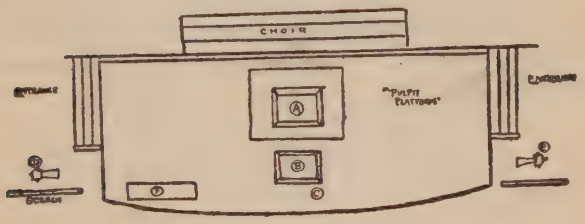
The lighting should be so arranged that the first and third episodes may be played with full illumination, but the second lighted so that only the four participants are visible. This may be arranged by two spotlights (right and left) (D) and (E) with their lenses hooded with oval cones of cardboard so that they throw only a broad pencil of light upon the singers and leave all else in shadow. When all other lights are extinguished, the choir will be lost in darkness.

On the level (C) a couch is (F) needed. It

V


ALTAR
ENTRANCE
ENTRANCE
CHOIR
CHOIR
ENTRANCE
ENTRANCE
ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENT

VI


CHOIR
ENTRANCE
"PULPIT PLATFORM"
ENTRANCE

had best be of squared stone (painted wall-board) to conform to the setting for the first and third episodes.

Entrances are needed right and left, rear, and are desirable in front.

II

FOR A CHURCH WITH A PULPIT PLATFORM

The choir will be at the rear, high (?).

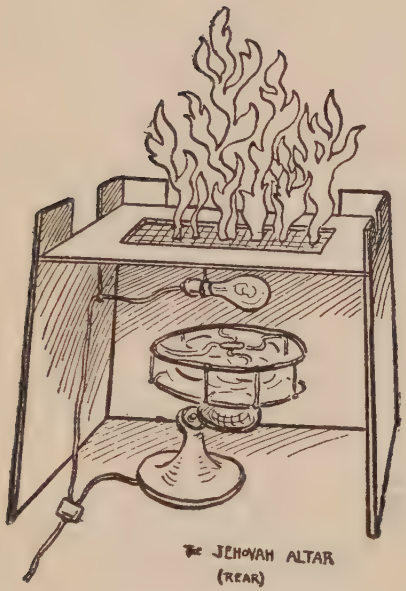
On the pulpit platform build the altar platform and altar to Jehovah (A), below it and in front the Baal altar (B). The second episode will be played on the front edge of the pulpit platform (C), and the hooded spotlights (D) and (E) must be well screened to prevent the light spilling back or front. The oval of the hood-mouth had best be very narrow and vertically long. Place the couch (F) off center.

III

THE JEHOVAH ALTAR

The mechanism for the "fire from Heaven" is most important.

The top of the altar has a hole cut in it, covered by coarse screening to which are attached chiffon



The JEHOVAH ALTAR
(REAR)

strips of flame color (yellow, orange and red) of varying length, cut flame shape.

Beneath the screening is hung a strong electric light and beneath the light is an electric fan laid with the fan horizontal. These to be connected to the same switch, which can be turned on from outside the playing area. The light and fan will cause the "flames" to mount.

If it is desired to make the fire from heaven more spectacular yet, a small amount of flashlight powder connected with an electric sparker can be set off. But, close beside the chiffon flames, this is unwise except with great precautions.

A PRELIMINARY SERVICE?

First Shall Be Read the Lesson: Ezekiel xxxiii 1-20, in which the prophet tells of a prophet's function.

Then Shall Certain Prayers Be Said:

For a true spirit of reverence in this service,
For due recognition of the ministry of music,
For a devout realization of the lesson of this story.
For inspiration to champion the cause of righteousness ourselves.

Then Shall Be said:

The General Thanksgiving and
The Lord's Prayer.

The Minister shall give such notices as may be expedient, after which the offerings of the people shall be received,

During the Singing of the two hymns (or one),

O God, Our Help in Ages Past,

Triumphant Zion, Lift Thine Head,

Ending With the Doxology.

COSTUMES

The costumes are all Oriental. The priests of Baal and their company in yellow. The Hebrews in bizarre Oriental colors and stripings. Standards may be borne, with very long shafts. These are effective in the climactic scene. Angel's wings to be made as previously indicated.

The illustrations give sufficient indication of costumes: no detailed description is necessary.

THE ORATORIO

FIRST EPISODE

ELIJAH THREATENS THE THREE YEARS DROUGHT, FOR THE SIN OF AHAB AND FOR THE PEOPLE'S BAALISM.

(The choir enters, right and left rear, filling their seats. The free group enters and sits in various easy attitudes about the playing space.

ELIJAH *and* OBADIAH *enter, right, rear. There is immediate antagonism manifested by all.* ELIJAH *mounts beside Jehovah's altar;* OBADIAH *stands below and beside him.*)

ELIJAH (*sings*): (*Introduction, p. 3.*)

As the Lord of Israel liveth, before whom I stand:
There shall not be dew nor rain these years
But according to my word.

(*As the organ begins the overture he surveys the hostile people, who shake their fists at him, sneer at him, and turn from him, all in dumb show.* ELIJAH *then strides out whence he came.*)

(The organ plays the overture (pp. 4-7). *The people relax into despair; into prayer, until at the end all are silently kneeling.*)

THE PEOPLE (*still kneeling*): (*No. 1, "Help, Lord," pp. 8-14.*)

Help, Lord! Help, Lord!
Wilt thou quite destroy us?
(*Hands held high.*)
The harvest now is over,
The summer days are gone:
And yet no power cometh to help us!
(*Palms up, empty.*)
Will then the Lord be no more God in Zion?
(*Gestures of despair.*)
(*Recitative.*)

The deeps afford no water, the rivers are exhausted,
The suckling's tongue now cleaveth for thirst to his mouth:
The infant children ask for bread
And there is no one breaketh it to feed them!
(*Still kneeling and petitioning, hands clasped, etc. The tempest of despair is now past.*) (*No. 2, pp. 16-19.*)
Lord, bow Thine ear to our prayer!
(*soprano and alto solists may stand, with attitude of prayer.*)
Zion spreadeth her hands for aid;
And there is neither help nor comfort.
(OBADIAH *mounts the altar-platform as the people continue*)
Lord, bow Thine ear to our prayer!
Bow Thine ear!

OBADIAH (*standing by the altar, sings. As he begins, the people turn their backs on him, in anger and scorn. He is* ELIJAH'S *friend: the antipathy felt for* ELIJAH *is visited on him.*) (*No. 3, p. 20.*)
Ye people, rend your hearts, and not your garments,
For your transgressions:
Even as Elijah hath sealed the heavens through the word of God;
I therefore say to you, Forsake your idols,
Return to God: for He is slow to anger

And merciful and kind and gracious
And repenteth Him of the evil.

(*The people slowly turn toward him, but not with cordiality. They sit carelessly, indifferent to* OBADIAH'S *aria. No. 4, pp. 21-22.*)

OBADIAH (*pleading with them*):

"If with all your hearts ye truly seek Me
Ye shall ever surely find Me."
Thus saith our God.
Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!

(*The angels enter at the rear and stand in a row. In a chancel church, across the space behind the Jehovah altar; in a pulpit-platform church, either down below the platform on the floor-level or in the highest row of the choir seats, behind all the other singers.*)

"If with all your hearts ye truly seek Me,
Ye shall ever surely find Me."
Thus saith our God!

(ELIJAH *enters left rear and pauses a moment irresolute at the hostile people. No. 5, "Yet doth the Lord," pp. 23-31 had best be omitted as being a feasible "cut." The choir goes direct to No. 6, p. 32.*)

AN ANGEL (*recitative. Pointing off—right*):

Elijah! get thee hence, Elijah,
Depart and turn thee eastward.

(*Omit the lines, "Thither hide thee by Cherith's brook. There shalt thou drink its water. And the Lord Thy God hath commandeth the ravens to feed thee there.*")

So do according unto His word!

THE ANGELS: (*double quartet. "For He shall give His angels." No. 7, pp. 33-39. To Elijah. The People do not see the angels.*)

For He shall give His angels charge over thee:
That shall protect thee in all the ways thou goest:
That their hands shall uphold and guide thee
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

THE ANGEL: (*alto solo, "Now Cherith," p. 40, beginning with the line,* —)

Elijah! Arise and depart
And get thee to Zarepath:
Thither abide.
For the Lord commandeth a widow woman there
To sustain thee.
And the barrel of meal shall not waste,
Neither shall the cruse of oil fail,
Until the day that the Lord sendeth rain
Upon the earth.

(ELIJAH *departs, rear, right. The angels*

exit. To end the episode the choir repeats a portion of the opening chorus, beginning with the last bar on page 12 and continuing through page 14.)

THE PEOPLE (*standing and making gestures of anguished entreaty*):

Will the Lord be no more God in Zion?
The harvest now is over, the summer days are gone.
Help Lord!
And yet no power cometh to help us!

(*The people collapse, and the lights are extinguished. End of First Episode.*)

THE SECOND EPISODE

THE WIDOW OF ZAREPATH

(*In the darkness the* WIDOW, *her child, and* ELIJAH *group themselves about the couch. The hooded spotlights are then turned on, illuminating the narrow space of platform or chancel in which this scene is played. Choir in deep shadow.*)

THE WIDOW (*in grief-stricken agony, kneeling beside the boy, who lies prone upon the couch. No. 8, "What have I to do with thee." pp. 41-47*):

What have I to do with thee, O man of God?

Art thou come to me, to call my sin unto remembrance?
To slay my son art thou come hither?
Help me, man of God!
(*She stands. Appropriate action.*)
My son is sick! And his sickness is so sore
That there is no breath left in him.
I go mourning all the day long:
I lie down and weep at night!
See mine affliction!
Be thou the orphan's helper!
Help my son!
There is no breath left in him!

ELIJAH (*advancing to the boy. Tenderly he bends above him, then prays to God*):
Give me thy son.
Turn unto her, O Lord my God!
O turn in mercy: in mercy help the widow's son!
For thou art gracious and full of compassion,
And plenteous in mercy and truth.
(*He kneels beside the couch.*)
Lord my God, let the spirit of this child return,
That he again may live!

THE WIDOW (*joining in the prayer*):
Shall the dead arise and praise thee?

ELIJAH (*kneeling*):
Lord my God! Let the spirit of this child return that he again may live!

(*The boy stirs, raises a hand to his forehead, opens his eyes, and smiles weakly at his mother.* ELIJAH *leaps to his feet. The* WIDOW *sits on the edge of the couch.*)

THE WIDOW:

The Lord hath heard thy prayer.
The soul of my son reviveth.
My son reviveth!

(*She gathers the boy to her, ecstatically.*)

ELIJAH (*almost incredulous with joy*):

Now behold, thy son liveth!

THE WIDOW:

Now by this I know that thou art the man of God,
And that His word in thy mouth is the truth.

(*Appealing to* ELIJAH.)

What shall I render to the Lord
For all the benefits to me?

(*The* ANGEL *enters, left.*)

ELIJAH (*crossing over to her*):

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
With all thine heart, and with all thy soul
And with all thy might.
O blessed are they who fear Him.

(*To end this episode, we borrow a number from the end of the book. The* ANGEL *sings No. 31, "O rest in the Lord," pp. 149-150. The* WIDOW *fondles her child.* ELIJAH *watches compassionately.*)

THE WIDOW'S SON

THE ANGEL (*hand raised in blessing during the latter part of the solo*):

O Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him,
And He shall give thee thy heart's desires.
Commit thy way unto Him and trust in Him,
And fret not thyself because of evil doers.
O rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him!

(*The spotlights are extinguished.* ELIJAH, *the* WIDOW, *the child, and the* ANGEL *go out in the darkness.*)

THE THIRD EPISODE

(Three years later)

THE CONTEST WITH THE PRIESTS OF BAAL

(*All the lights come on. The choir and others stand.* ELIJAH *enters, and all immediately manifest their extreme indignation against him. Sneers, fists, backs toward him. He mounts the platform of the Jehovah altar.*)

ELIJAH (*No. 10, "As God the Lord of Sabaoth," p. 55 f.*):

As God the Lord of Sabaoth liveth
Before whom I stand,
Three years this day fulfilled,

I will show myself unto Ahab;
And the Lord will then send rain again
Upon the earth.

(*During the allegro vivace organ march,* AHAB *enters, probably left, rear, or on some other prominent level. As many banner-bearers as can be spared should accompany him, ranged on either side of him.* AHAB *arrogantly challenges* ELIJAH.)

AHAB:

Art thou Elijah?
Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

THE CHOIR (*joining in with* AHAB):

Thou art Elijah;
Thou art he that troubleth Israel.

ELIJAH (*folding his arms and repudiating the accusation*):

I never troubled Israel's peace.
It is thou, Ahab (*pointing unflinchingly*)
and all thy father's house.
Ye have forsaken God's commands,
And thou hast followed Baalim.

(*Omit the lines,*

"Now send and gather to me
The whole of Israel
Unto Mt. Carmel," and continue:)

Summon the prophets of Baal,
And also the prophets of the groves

Who are feasted at Jezebel's table,
Then we shall see whose God is the Lord.

THE CHOIR:

And then we shall see whose God is Lord.

(*The Priests of Baal, a part of the pantomime group, march with their standards and surround the Baal altar, standing back to the congregation, facing* ELIJAH *above them at the Jehovah altar.*)

ELIJAH:

Rise then, ye priests of Baal:

(*Omit the lines,*

"Select and slay a bullock
And put no fire under it," and continue:)

Uplift your voices and call the god ye worship:
And I will then call on the Lord Jehovah.
And the God who by fire shall answer,
Let Him be God.

THE PEOPLE (*hands raised*):

Yea, and the God who by fire shall answer
Let him be God.

ELIJAH (*with a sweeping, disdainful gesture*):

Call first upon your God;
Your numbers are many.
I, even I only, remain,
One prophet of the Lord:
Invoke your forest gods
And mountain deities.

THE PEOPLE (*No. 11, "Baal, we cry to thee," pp. 60-67*):

(*With much action. Hands may be raised on accented notes of "Baal," by the respective part groups of the choir and by the pantomime group encircling the Baal altar.*)

Baal, we cry to thee!
Hear and answer us!
Heed the sacrifice we offer!
Baal, O hear us and answer us!

(*The priests lift their standard at arm's length now with each "Baal."*)

Hear us, Baal!
Hear, mighty God!
Baal, O answer us!
Baal, let thy flames fall
And extirpate the foe!
Hear us, Baal! Hear, mighty God!

(*They point at* ELIJAH *with the words "the foe." As the chorus mounts toward its tremendous climax, the carefully rehearsed pantomime increases in intensity.*)

ELIJAH (*with broadest sarcasm, taunting them. No. 12, "Call him louder," pp. 68-69*):

Call him louder!
For he is a god!
He talketh, or he is pursuing
Or he is on a journey,

Or peradventure he sleepeth:
So awaken him. Call him louder!

THE PEOPLE (*while the pantomime chorus alternately prostrates itself and raises its standards to tiptoe height*):
Hear our cry, O Baal!
Hear our cry, O Baal!
Now arise. Wherefore slumber?

ELIJAH (*comes around to the front of the Jehovah altar, above the Baal altar. From his height he places his foot upon its top, if the altars are so built so that this is dignifiedly feasible*):
Call him louder! He heareth not.
With knives and lancets cut yourselves
After your manner.
Leap upon the altar ye have made.
Call him and prophesy:
Not a voice will answer you,
None will listen, none heed you.

THE PEOPLE (*with maximum endeavor and emotion*):
Baal! Baal!
Hear and answer, Baal!
Mark how the scorner derideth us!
Hear and answer!
Hear and answer!
Baal! Baal!
Hear and answer!

(*There is a tense silence as all wait. Then*

the choir and pantomime group sink aghast to their seats. When silence grows inexorable, ELIJAH *becomes tender.*)

ELIJAH (*No. 14, "Draw near, all ye people," pp. 75-78*):

Draw near, all ye people;
Come to me.

(*He goes to the rear of the altar and kneels there, face to the congregation, singing:*)

Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,
This day let it be known that Thou art God.
And I am thy servant!
Lord God of Abraham!
O shew to all this people
That I have done these things
According to Thy word!
O hear me, Lord, and answer me.

(*Angels enter and range themselves either behind* ELIJAH *or behind the choir.*)

THE ANGELS (*No. 15, "Cast thy burden," p. 77*):

Cast thy burden upon the Lord
And He shall sustain thee:
He never will suffer the righteous to fall:
He is thy right hand.
Thy mercy, Lord, is great,
And far above the Heavens.
Let none be made ashamed
That wait upon Thee!

ELIJAH (*No. 16, "O Thou who makest Thine angels," pp. 78-83; with great impressiveness*):

O THOU WHO MAKEST THINE ANGELS SPIRITS: THOU WHOSE MINISTERS ARE FLAMING FIRES: LET THEM NOW DESCEND!

(*A moment of tense silence. The light and fan in Jehovah altar are turned on. The people swiftly and supinely drop to their knees, cowering. There is no music from the organ* (*p. 79*) *until the fire is "burning" brightly. Then, with terrified gestures of pointing and of abject awe the people rise on their knees.*)

THE PEOPLE:

The fire descends from Heaven!
Fire descends from Heaven!
The flames consume his offering!
Before him upon your faces fall!

(*They make obeisance. The pantomime group is prostrate.*)

The Lord is God! the Lord is God!

(*They cross their arms upon their breasts.*)

O Israel, hear! Our God is one Lord:
And we will have no other Gods
Before the Lord!

(*Omit p. 84, "Take all the prophets of Baal," etc.*)

(*The priests of Baal steal guiltily away by*

nearest exits. The people remain kneeling, but upright.)

THE ANGELS (*using the number beginning on p. 139, No. 28, "Lift thine eyes." pp. 139-140*):

Lift thine eyes, O lift thine eyes
To the mountains, whence cometh help.
Thy help cometh from the Lord,
The maker of Heaven and earth.
He hath said, thy foot shall not be moved.
Thy keeper will never slumber.
Lift thine eyes, O lift thine eyes
To the mountains, whence cometh help.

THE PEOPLE (*being seated, except the pantomime group which stands in a circle about the altar, backs to it and shoulder to shoulder, arms forward, palms upward. No. 29. "He, watching over Israel," pp. 141-146*):

He, watching over Israel
Slumbers not, nor sleeps.
Should'st thou, walking in grief, anguish,
He will quicken thee.
He, watching Israel, slumbers not, nor sleeps.

(*The fire may, if desired, die down and cease.*)

ELIJAH (*gesturing the people to their feet. He prepares them for happiness. A boy enters and stands left rear. If he is not the singer, the proper soloist should be immediately by him in the crowd. No. 19 B,*

beginning on p. 92, "Thou hast overthrown thine enemies!")

O Lord, Thou hast overthrown Thine enemies
And destroyed them:
Look down on us from Heaven, O Lord:
Regard the distress of Thy people!

THE PEOPLE (*clasping hands on their breasts*):

Open the heavens and send us relief.
Help, help thy servant now, O God.

ELIJAH (*turning to the youth and pointing off-stage. All the people turn in that direction.*)

Go up now, child, and look toward the sea.
Hath my prayer been heard by the Lord?

THE YOUTH:

There is nothing.
The Heavens are as brass;
They are as brass above me.

ELIJAH (*turning to the altar again*):

When the Heavens are closed up,
Because they have sinned against thee;
Yet if they pray and confess Thy name
And turn from their sin when Thou dost afflict them,
Then hear from Heaven and forgive the sin:
Help, send Thy servant help, O God!

THE PEOPLE (*beginning to edge closer together until they are in a solid mass across the rear of the playing space or choir space*):

Then hear from Heaven and forgive the sin:
(*Looking upward*)
Help, send Thy servant help, O God!

ELIJAH (*turning again to the youth and pointing off-stage.*):
Go up again
And still look toward the sea!

THE YOUTH (*shading his eyes and peering off into the distance, left off-stage*):
There is nothing.
The earth is as iron under me.

ELIJAH:
Hearest thou no sound of rain?
Seest thou nothing arise from the deep?

THE YOUTH (*obediently searching the horizon*):
No, there is nothing.

ELIJAH (*arms outspread, head high, intensely*):
Have respect to the prayer of Thy servant,
O Lord, my God!
Unto Thee will cry. Lord, my rock,
Be not silent to me
And Thy great mercies
Remember, O Lord.

THE YOUTH (*excitedly, while the people peer and crane in the same direction off-stage, stepping closer and closer to each other*):
Behold, a little cloud
Ariseth now from the waters.
It is like a man's hand!
(*with increasing excitement.*)

The Heavens are black with clouds and with wind
The storm rusheth louder and louder!

THE PEOPLE (*still facing left, watching the approach of the storm with great joy*):
Thanks be to God for all His mercies!
(*Hands out, palms up.*)
Thanks be to God!

ELIJAH (*likewise watching the storm*):
Thanks be to God! for He is gracious
And His mercy endureth for evermore!

THE PEOPLE (*with much descriptive pantomime of rushing waters, of thanksgiving to God, and of mutual love. No. 20. "Thanks be to God," pp. 98-107*):
Thanks be to God!
He laveth the thirsty land.
(*much byplay.*)
The waters gather, they rush along!
They are lifting their voices!
Thanks be to God!
(*They depict the progress of the storm nearer and nearer.*)
The stormy billows are high;
Their fury is mighty!
But the Lord is above them
And Almighty!
(*With p. 105, the gestures grow concerted, as indicated.*)

Thanks be to God, He laves the thirsty land.
(*Arms horizontal, wide.*)
Thanks be to God!
The waters gather, they rush along.
(*Arms vertical, hands still, until* (*107*) *with the final two lines, they move their hands, shimmering in the light, as high as they can reach.*)
Thanks be to God!
He laveth the thirsty land!
(*Which ends the episode and the portion of the oratorio possibly to be dramatized. The choir may either exit at the end of the last chorus, as if rushing off to greet the storm. Or all participants may kneel for the closing of the service with prayers and benediction.*)

A Dramatic Adaptation

of

The Oratorio

"Judas Maccabaeus"

by G. F. Handel

FOR USE AS A SUNG

MIRACLE-PLAY

IN CHURCH

JUDAS MACCABÆUS

NOTES:

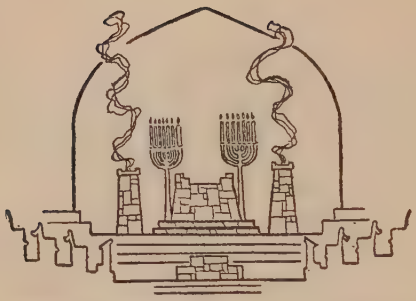
Identical considerations govern the adaptation of Parts One and Three of the oratorio, "Judas Maccabæus," as are explained in the foreword to the adaptation of "Elijah." The idea and the ideal are the same.

The arrangements of the choir and the chancel or pulpit-platform are also very much the same. The diagrams sufficiently indicate the placing of the altar candlesticks and pillars, and the area of the action. In this case, however, the body of the church itself is also used for the procession.

Judas' part should be memorized throughout. The chorus must memorize at least "See, the conquering hero comes," and the march, "Sing unto God and high affections raise."

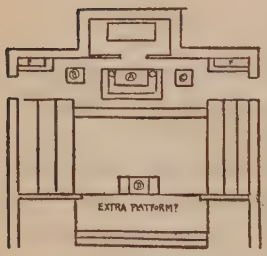
The costumes are typically Oriental. The crowd (choir) should be in earth-dye colors, with stripes, and in dull reds and blues.

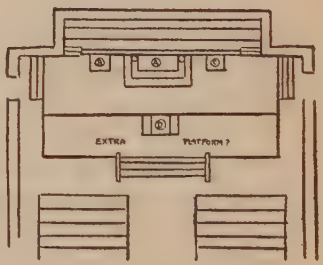
The soldiers of Maccabæus may wear knee-length blue or brown canton-flannel tunics, belted with silver oilcloth belts and stenciled on the breast with the Hebrew six-point star of the two interlaced triangles. Headkerchiefs to match the tunics. The helmets are



I
CHANCEL-TYPE

II
PLATFORM-TYPE





silvered "derby" crowns, cut in the proper shape and ornamented in the front with the same star. Spears with silvered points—if the church is large with very long shafts for the "height of the picture." Torches can be turned in wood, with an opening for plumbers' candles to be inset. The High Priest should be clothed in a long, full, white, belted cassock. A breastplate of gold with twelve jewels upon it. A mitre, which can be made of silvered oilcloth cut, stitched, and stuffed to hold its shape.

Several people must be on the alert in the front vestibule of the church when the procession passes out, to give lighted torches to the soldiers and populace for their return to the chancel.

A PROGRAM NOTE:

"The Story of Judas Maccabæus is heroic and romantic. The situation as Part One opens is after the death of Mattathias, his father, an old priest who had dared to withstand the emissaries of Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus, a descendant of Alexander the Great, in his misguided zeal to make all the world Greek had defiled the Temple at Jerusalem by causing swine to be sacrificed there. ("The abomination of desolation," the He-

brews called this.) He was forcing Jews everywhere to forswear Jehovah. Mattathias had slain the captain of soldiers who were forcing him to kill swine on the local altar, and had sounded the note of revolt. All the odds were against him, but his faith was uncompromising. Part One shows the selection of Judas to lead the cause of God. The scene is in the highlands.

Between Parts One and Two much is left to the imagination. (Handel's Part II is omitted, except for portions inserted into *our* Part II, which is Handel's Part III.)

Eight months elapse. Judas has won phenomenal victories. Israel's hope and cause have been vindicated. Judas has captured greater and greater hosts, until at last by stratagem and heroism his army has won its way into Jerusalem, to the precincts of the defiled Temple, which is now reconsecrated by the Feast of Lights. The scene is now the Temple at Jerusalem."

SOLOIST CHARACTERS:

Simon Maccabæus
Judas Maccabæus
The High Priest
An Israelitish Woman (mouthpiece for the populace)

ANOTHER
A MESSENGER

THE ORATORIO

PART ONE

THE SELECTION OF JUDAS

(*All pages and numbers noted are from the standard Novello "pocket edition" of the oratorio. If this edition is not available, the words of the play as given here will surely be adequate to identify the proper sequence in any other edition.*

During the overture the choir enters, silently. Taking its place with appearance of grief and dejection. The Israelites are lamenting the death of Mattathias. The choir should not be confined to the regular seats, but at least some of its members should be able to move freely here and there in the chancel. When all are ready the chorus begins. The overture can probably be much shortened.)

CHORUS (*No. 2, pp. 4-9*):

Mourn, ye afflicted children, the remains
Of captive Judah, mourn with solemn strains:
Your sanguine hopes of liberty give o'er:
Your hero, friend, and father is no more.

(*The people prostrate themselves.*)

An Israelitish Man (*in the crowd. Standing amid the prone figures. No. 3, Recitative, "Well may your sorrows," pp. 9-10*):

Well may your sorrows, brethren, flow
In all the expressive signs of woe:
Your softer garments tear,
And squalid sackcloth wear,
Your drooping heads with ashes strew,
And with the flowing tear your cheeks bedew.

An Israelitish Woman (*rising upright on her knees at first. Gestures of Oriental vigor, in her sorrow. The women about her toss their veils and scarves in abandonment of grief. Halfway through her song the Israelitish woman rises to her feet. No. 38, p. 10*):

Daughters, let your distressful cries
And loud lament ascend the skies:
Your tender bosoms beat, and tear
With hands remorseless, your disheveled hair:
For pale and breathless, Mattathias lies,
Sad emblem of his country's miseries.

Chorus (*The people rise upright on their knees. Some in the back rows stand. Gestures of grief. Chorus No. 5, "For Sion lamentation make," pp. 14-17*):

For Sion lamentation make
With words that weep and tears that speak!

SIMON MACCABÆUS (*standing forth from the people, in whose midst he has been, anonymous. The people sit or stand in attention to him. Recitative, No. 6, p. 18*):

Not vain is all this storm of grief.
To vent our sorrows gives relief.
Wretched indeed: but let not Judah's race
Their ruin, with desponding arms, embrace:
Distractful doubt and desperation
Ill become the Chosen Nation
Chosen by the Great I AM!
The Lord of Hosts! Who still the same
We trust will give attentive ear
To the sincerity of prayer.

CHORUS (*all the people standing, arms raised, palms flat and upturned, in ritual uniformity of intercession. Chorus, No. 8, "O Father, Whose almighty power," pp. 20-25*):

O Father, Whose almighty power
The heavens and earth and seas adore,
The hearts of Judah Thy delight,
In one defensive band unite.
And grant a leader bold and brave
(JUDAS *here enters, unknowing*)
If not to conquer, born to save!
(*During the repetition of this phrase, pp. 23-34, he looks about puzzled; then, catching the drift of things, dutifully joins in the prayer.*)

SIMON (*leaping up on the pedestal. Rapturously, as if possessed by inspiration. The people crowd about him. Recitative, No. 9, "I feel a Deity within," p. 26*):

I feel a Deity within
Who, the bright Cherubim between,
His radiant glory erst displayed!
To Israel's distressful prayer
He hath vouchsafed a gracious ear
(*His hand shoots toward* JUDAS)
And points out Maccabæus to their aid.
Judas shall set the captive free
And lead us on to victory!

(JUDAS, *startled, holds back a moment, then kneels before his brother; rises and faces the people, standing below* SIMON.)

JUDAS (*with inflaming earnestness, himself selflessly dedicated and enthusiastically urgent. A crescendo of gestures, and other action. The people are stirred. The soldiers drop their cloaks, revealing their tunics, and step forward about* JUDAS *as he completes his plea. Air, No. 10, "Arm, arm, ye brave!" pp. 27-30*):

Arm, arm, ye brave! A noble cause,
The cause of Heaven, your zeal demands:
In defense of your nation, religion, and laws,
The Almighty Jehovah will strengthen your hands.

CHORUS (*opening, if possible, with trumpets. Great excitement all about the soldiers and* JUDAS. *The soldiers line up in a semi-circle about the pedestal.* SIMON *comes down and stands by* JUDAS. *Chorus, No. 11, "We come, in bright array," pp. 30-33*):

We come! We come, in bright array,
Judah, thy scepter, to obey!

JUDAS (*mounting the pedestal. The soldiers kneel on one knee, in fealty. Recit., No. 12, "'Tis well, my friends," pp. 33-36*):

'Tis well, my friends: with transport I behold
The spirit of our fathers, famed of old
For their exploits in war:—Oh, may their fire
With active courage you, their sons, inspire:
As when the mighty Joshua fought
And those amazing wonders wrought:
Stood still, obedient to his voice, the sun,
Till kings he had destroyed and kingdoms won.

ISRAELITISH WOMAN (*in the crowd, as the chorus kneels, behind the kneeling soldiers. No. 14, Recit., "To Heaven's Almighty King we kneel," p. 37*):

To Heaven's Almighty King we kneel
For blessings on this exemplary zeal.
Bless him, Jehovah, bless him, and once more
(*hands toward* JUDAS)
To thy own Israel liberty restore.

CHORUS (*still kneeling. Trumpets. Skip to No. 20, Chorus, "Lead on, Lead on," pp. 46-50*):

Lead on, Lead on! Judah disdains
The galling load of hostile chains.

(*During this chorus* JUDAS *is arming.*)

JUDAS (*as the soldiers rise, and the people also. No. 21, Recit., "So will'd my father, now at rest," pp. 94-50*):

So will'd my father, now at rest
In the eternal mansions of the blest:
"Can ye behold," said he, "the miseries
In which the long-insulted Judah lies?
Can ye behold their dire distress,
And not, at least, attempt redress?"
Then faintly, with expiring breath,
"Resolve, my sons, on liberty or death!"

(*He comes down from the pedestal and advances to the front, his hands and eyes raised high.*)

We come, O see thy sons prepare
The rough habiliments of war,
With hearts intrepid and revengeful hands,
To execute, O Sire, thy dread commands!

(*He turns back to the congregation, strikes a martial attitude, waiting the response which comes.*)

TRIO or CHORUS or TRIO and CHORUS:

(*The soldiers form a straight line or two across the center, facing* JUDAS. *The trio*

of singers is in the crowd behind them. No. 22, Chorus, "Disdainful of danger," pp. 50-55. This number is usually sung as a trio and repeated as a chorus, but for this dramatized version this may be too prolonged a number.)

Disdainful of danger, we'll rush on the foe,
That Thy power, O Jehovah, all nations may know!

JUDAS (*lifting his sword, and facing his men obliquely, that the congregation may also see his profile. As he comes to the phrase "to the field again," he may face the congregation, pointing out past them to the imaginary field. Skip to p. 114, No. 45, Air, "Sound an alarm," pp. 114-116. Trumpets on page 116.*)

Sound an alarm! Your silver trumpets sound!
And call the brave, and only brave around.
Who listeth, follow! To the field again!
Justice, with courage, is a thousand men!

CHORUS (*the soldiers step to the very front and at the word "conquest" whip out their swords and hold them vertically, high above their heads. No. 46, Chorus, "We hear," pp. 117-121. Trumpets now and again.*)

We hear! We hear the pleasing, dreadful call:

And follow thee to conquest. If to fall,
For laws, religion, liberty, we fall!

(*At the end of the chorus* JUDAS *leads his soldiers straight down through the center aisle, through the congregation, out into the vestibule of the church. The people crowd to the front of the platform with hands held high and fluttering, bidding them godspeed.*)

PART TWO

(*Handel's Part III, except for a few numbers from his Part II.*)

JUDAS' TRIUMPHANT RETURN

(*There is a period of silence. The lights are dimmed. It may be wise for a speaker to say an explanatory word, such as:*

"*Eight months elapse.* JUDAS *has won increasing victories. Israel's hopes and cause have been vindicated.* JUDAS *has captured greater and greater hosts, until at last, by stratagem and heroism, his army has won its way into Jerusalem, to the precincts of the defiled Temple, now being reconsecrated by the Feast of Lights. The imaginary scene, therefore, of Part Two is in The Temple Courts.*"

The HIGH PRIEST *mounts to the steps of the altar; the spotlights illumine him and*

it. On either side of him an acolyte mounts the steps to light the candles in the candelabra and to light the incense atop the pillars.)

THE HIGH PRIEST (*back to the congregation. The chorus kneels back to the congregation, also, in rows across the platform. No. 63, Air, "Father of Heaven," pp. 139-142*):

Father of Heaven, from Thy eternal throne,
Look with an eye of blessing down,
While we prepare, with holy rites,
To solemnize the Feast of Lights.

AN ACOLYTE (*dressed as a boy, standing below the altar. The people sit back upon their heels, listening. Skip to p. 124, No. 50, Air, "Wise men, flattering, may deceive you," pp. 124-126*):

Wise men, flattering, may deceive you
With their vain mysterious art:
Magic charms can ne'er relieve you
Nor can heal the wounded heart.
But true wisdom can relieve you,
God like wisdom from above:
This alone can ne'er deceive you,
This alone all pains remove.

TWO ISRAELITISH WOMEN (*among the people. No. 51, Duet, "Oh, never bow we down," pp. 127-130*):

O never, never bow we down

To the rude stock or sculptured stone:
But ever worship Israel's God,
Ever obedient to His awful nod.

CHORUS (*The people are kneeling upright, or seated in their reverent ranks. During the chorus the priest makes pantomime of prayer, of sacrifice, and of blessing. No. 52, Chorus, "We never will bow down," pp. 130-138*):

We never, never will bow down
To the rude stock or sculptured stone.
We worship God, and God alone.

(*Unison gestures of adoration. Carefully rehearsed, that this chorus may not be monotonous; work to a real climax, with drilled gestures, with scarves and hands high above the heads.*)

ISRAELITISH WOMEN (*likewise from among the people. Skip to p. 172, No. 66, Duet, "O lovely peace," pp. 172-174. This duet may easily be omitted; it is not dramatically necessary, but its music is exquisite and helps the "atmosphere."*)

O lovely Peace, with plenty crowned,
Come spread thy blessings all around;
Let fleecy flocks the hills adorn,
And valleys smile with wavy corn.

AN ISRAELITISH MESSENGER (*hastening up the aisle from the door. As he starts to sing the people rise, startled, to their feet; the*

HIGH PRIEST *turns to see and hear. No. 57, Recit., "From Capharsalama," pp. 149-150. In order to fit this speech into the adapted story it may be wise to shorten the solo and to rephrase some of its wording, as follows*):

From Capharsalama, on eagle wings I fly,
With tidings of impetuous joy
(*to p. 150*)
For Judas, undismay'd,
Met, fought, and vanquished all the rageful train.
But lo! the Conqueror comes!
(*He points to the doors.*)
(*The chorus streams down through the church to meet the returning army, preferably going down the side aisles. While it and the priest are making this divided procession of welcome, the semi-chorus—three or six is enough—remains at the front of the platform, singing. At the end of this number it goes down the center aisle to meet* JUDAS *and his soldiers, now advancing up the aisle.*)

SEMI-CHORUS (*No. 58, Chorus, "See the conquering hero comes," pp. 151-152*):

See the conquering hero comes!
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums:
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,
Songs of triumph to him sing.

See the godlike youth advance,
Breathe the flutes and lead the dance:
Myrtle wreaths and roses twine,
To deck the hero's brow divine.

(*As the soldiers leave the vestibule and as the chorus passes through, each individual is given one or two lighted torches. The body of the church will of course be darkened since the beginning of the oratorio. In one irregular but swiftly marching stream the chorus and soldiers go up the aisle, led by the priest, with* JUDAS *just behind. And as they march, they sing the marching chorus. Trumpets.*)

EVERYONE (*full chorus, p. 153. This chorus should be begun when well up the aisle, and must be sung through twice, not ending until all are on the platform again. It must be carefully rehearsed, and carried through with noble zest*):

See, the conquering hero comes!
Sound the trumpets! Beat the drums!
Sports prepare, the laurel bring!
Songs of triumph to him sing!
See the conquering hero comes!
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums!

(JUDAS *goes up the altar steps, holding his sword high across his palms; he lays the sword on the altar and kneels. As he does so, his soldiers and the chorus do likewise.*

It will be effective if, as all kneel, they bring their torches down before their breasts, shielding the light thus from the congregation, as if all the lights had been quenched. As he rises, so do the others, lights still hidden. During this pantomime the organ and trumpets play the March, No. 59, p. 154. JUDAS *turns, remaining at the altar.*)

CHORUS (*No. 60, p. 155, "Sing unto God." This number may well be curtailed by the omission of the first page, of solos; beginning*)

Sing unto God, and high affections raise
(*all torches held so that their light appears*)
To crown this conquest with unmeasured praise.
(*At the end all torches held high, at tiptoe stretch.*)

JUDAS (*at the altar, facing his people. Skip to p. 165, unless a more extended solo is desired for* JUDAS *here, in which case let him sing No. 62, "With honor let desert be crowned," pp. 162-164 and add No. 63, Recit., "Peace to my countrymen," p. 165. Words altered to the following*):

Peace to my countrymen,—Peace and Liberty
With honor crowned shall deserving be.
The trumpets ne'er in vain shall sound.
Peace! God's victory won, we bow to Him;

To Him ascribed be all sovereign power
And we do vow by Him on land and sea
To curb the proud and set the captive free.

CHORUS (*the people move rear toward the altar, in two companies facing each other, an aisle to the altar through their midst, the soldiers on the front ranks. Their torches form straight lines. No. 64, Chorus, "To our great God," pp. 165-170*):

To our great God be all the honor giv'n,
That grateful hearts can send from earth to heav'n.

SIMON (*mounting the pedestal;* JUDAS *still at the altar. No. 67, Air., "Rejoice, O Judah!" pp. 177-179. Probably it will be best to omit the long organ introduction*):

Rejoice, O Judah, and in songs divine
With Cherubim and Seraphim harmoniously join.

(*As the air draws toward its close the people range themselves, facing the congregation, at the rear of the platform, as high on steps, etc., as feasible, leaving no one front except* SIMON. *The priest is beside* JUDAS.)

CHORUS (*all the people, torches upraised. No. 68, Chorus, "Hallelujah, Amen!" pp. 179-182*):

Hallelujah! Amen!
Rejoice, O Judah, and in songs divine,

With Cherubim and Seraphim harmoniously join!

(*At the end of the chorus sudden and complete silence for a full minute. All motionless. Then the minister pronounces the benediction and the choir files out, the organist playing again the March, No. 59, p. 154.*)

Religious Books of Permanent Appeal

THE STORY OF THE OTHER WISE MAN

by HENRY VAN DYKE

The poetic but reverent and tender imagination of Dr. Henry van Dyke out of one comparatively minor detail constructs a romance which teaches a sweet and moving lesson. *Illustrated*

MY SHEPHERD LIFE IN GALILEE

by STEPHEN A. HABOUSH

Because Mr. Haboush was born and reared in the province of Galilee, spending his youth in herding his father's sheep, and living in that peculiar and primitive environment in which Our Lord lived, he is able to unite in his book the exquisite charm of his native land and the technique of his Western education. *Illustrated*

THE SERMON ON THE CROSS

by VAN TASSEL SUTPHEN

Meditations upon the Passion of our Lord originally prepared for use at services on Good Friday and now offered with certain verbal revisions as a manual of private devotion and a contribution toward a more general observance of the Church's great Day of Remembrance.

PHILUS, THE STABLE BOY OF BETHLEHEM

by REV. EDMUND J. CLEVELAND, D.D.

Children's Story-Sermons for Christmas and other days and Seasons of the Christian year, equally well adapted for the home and for Sermon purposes in Children's meetings. *Illustrated*

THE CHRIST WE KNOW

by THE RT. REV. CHARLES FISKE, D.D.
Bishop of Central New York

A swift sketch of Christ's earthly career, frank in its attitude toward the latest Biblical criticism, vivid in its pictures of Jesus and his disciples, and sympathetic with the doubts and difficulties so prevalent in the minds of both old and young today.

ANTHOLOGY OF JESUS

Arranged and Edited by
SIR JAMES MARCHANT, K.B.E., LL.D.

This is a volume of great and lasting beauty from which no one can turn without a heightened understanding of the greatest figure in history. It is a complete compilation of the greatest utterances of all time about Jesus.

HARPER & BROTHERS

Publishers NEW YORK, N. Y.

T-171

RECENT BOOKS OF RELIGIOUS INTEREST

THE SINNER BELOVED: and Other Modern Biblical, Miracle and Morality Plays

OLD-TIME CHURCH DRAMA ADAPTED: Mystery Plays and Moralities of Earlier Days

By Reverend Phillips E. Osgood, D.D.

In "The Sinner Beloved" are gathered modern plays for the church itself and for the Parish House or out-of-doors. "Old-Time Church Drama Adapted" presents a group of ancient classic religious dramas arranged for simple, churchly use in the present time.

THE CHRIST WE KNOW

Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ, as Master, Lord, and Saviour

By The Right Reverend Charles Fiske, D.D.

This new study of the Life of Christ is written from the viewpoint of youth, but with ripe conviction. It finds Jesus more than "a glorified, spiritually-minded member of a noonday luncheon club" —He is Master, Saviour, and Lord.

CATHEDRAL SERMONS

By Very Reverend Howard Chandler Robbins, D.D.—*Preached in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York*

Dean Robbins is considered by Episcopalians one of the leading sermonizers in America, in that Communion. The volume should have a wide demand among Episcopalians, and enlist much interest among religious folk generally.

THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS

By Reverend Oliver C. Quick, D.D., *Canon of Carlisle Cathedral*

This book is an attempt to consider sacraments from the point of view of philosophy and general experience rather than from that of historical scholarship.

THE SERMON ON THE CROSS

By Van Tassel Sutphen

These meditations upon the Passion of our Lord are offered primarily as a manual of private devotion, and also as a contribution toward a worthy observance of the Church's great day of Remembrance, Good Friday.

HARPER & BROTHERS

Publishers

T-167

DATE DUE

PR 1260 .07 1928

Osgood, Phillips Endecott,
1882-

Old-time church drama
adapted

United Theological Seminary Library
MAIN PR1260.O7 1928
Osgood, Phill Old-time church drama adap
3 0645 0002 5535 2